

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS

AN EXAMINATION OF THE MAJOR OBJECTIONS RAISED
AGAINST THE TEACHINGS OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

(Revised and Greatly Enlarged)

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ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS

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When Christ was transfigured there appeared with Him on the mount "Moses and Elias talking with him." (See Matt. 17:3.) The fact that Moses was there proves that man is an immortal soul, for Moses died and was buried at the time of the Exodus.

There are two ways to view this transfiguration incident: as a vision or as a literal event. If we view it as a vision, then the objection before us is pointless, for in vision a prophet may have presented to him a picture of men and events without either the men or the events being at that moment actually before him. But if we view the incident as literal, which we believe it was, then the objection is equally pointless, for the transfiguration narrative says nothing about an immaterial spirit, or soul, called Moses hovering beside Christ. Instead we read that Christ was present, and beside Him, "Moses and Elias." We know that Christ was real—"the Word was made flesh." We know that Elias was translated bodily to heaven. Therefore we may rightly presume that he was real. And there is nothing in the account to suggest that Moses was any less real. We repeat, for it is of the essence of the question before us, that the account does not say that Moses' *spirit* was there, but that *Moses* was.

Further, the disciples most evidently must have considered Moses to be as truly real as the other two, for Peter wished to build three tabernacles, "one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Verse 4. Tabernacles are not built for immaterial spirits.

In his well-known Bible commentary, Adam Clarke, a Methodist scholar, and a believer in the immortal soul doctrine, makes this clear comment on Matthew 17:3:

"Elijah came from heaven in the same body which he had upon earth, for he was *translated*, and did not see death, 2 Kings ii.11. And the body of Moses was probably raised again, as a pledge of the *resurrection*; and as Christ is to come to judge the *quick* and the *dead*, for

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we shall not all *die*, but all shall be *changed*, 1 Cor. xv.51, he probably gave the full representation of this in the person of Moses, who *died*, and was thus raised to life, (or appeared now as he shall appear when raised from the dead in the last day,) and in the person of Elijah, who never *tasted death*. Both their bodies exhibit the same appearance, to show that the bodies of glorified saints are the same, whether the person had been *translated*, or whether he had *died*."

The very presence of Moses on the mount of transfiguration, which Clarke explains in terms of Moses' resurrection, may help us to understand the real meaning of the rather obscure passage in Jude: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Jude 9.

The transfiguration record provides support, not for the doctrine of immortal souls, freed from the shell of a body, but for the doctrine of the resurrection.

Objection 70

Christ said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. 10:28. This proves that the soul and the body are two distinctly different things, that the body can be destroyed and the soul remain, and therefore, that the soul is a separate entity that lives on forever after the body is dead.

Those who teach the immortal-soul doctrine teach not only that the souls of the righteous live on but that the souls of the wicked do also. They teach that though the body is destroyed, the soul is not. But this text explicitly declares that it is possible "to destroy *both* soul and body in hell," in other words, that it is possible "to kill the soul." Surely this is the last text in the world that the immortal-soul advocate should offer to support his belief.

But the believer in the immortality of the soul will remind us that at least the text makes clear that the body is one thing and the soul another, and therefore the soul should be considered a separate entity. The word here translated "soul" is from the Greek word *psuche*; indeed, this is true in every instance where the word "soul" is found in the New Testament in the King James Version of the Bible. But there are almost as many instances where *psuche* is translated "life." The translators, who were not inspired, *but who were believers in an immortal soul*, varied their translation of *psuche* according to their best understanding and inevitably through the eyes of their theology. We do not question their honesty, only their accuracy.

Note the following words of Christ as translated in this King James Version: "For whosoever will save his life [*psuche*] shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life [*psuche*] for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul [*psuche*]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul [*psuche*]?" Matt. 16:25, 26.

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Obviously the translators could not translate *psuche* in the twenty-fifth verse as "soul" without creating a theological dilemma of the first order. In the twenty-sixth verse "lose his own *psuche*" obviously means lose it in the judgment fires that devour the damned. But in the twenty-fifth verse Christ states that it is possible for a man to "*lose his psuche*" for His [Christ's] sake! The translators solved the dilemma and saved their immortal-soul doctrine by translating *psuche* as "life" in the twenty-fifth verse and as "soul" in the twenty-sixth. We might add that the translators of the American Standard Version (commonly known as the Revised Version) and the translators of the Revised Standard Version, both translate *psuche* as "life" in the twenty-sixth as well as in the twenty-fifth verse.

Coming back now to Matthew 10:28: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul [*psuche*]: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul [*psuche*] and body in hell." When the word "life" is substituted for "soul," as it may most properly be, any semblance of an argument for the immortal-soul doctrine disappears. Indeed, the text becomes one of the strongest in support of the doctrine that the day is coming when the wicked will have the very life within them destroyed; and if that does not mean final annihilation, we do not know how that meaning could be conveyed in words.

Objection 71

Paul says, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Cor. 4:16. This proves that the real man, the soul, is something different from the body, and flourishes despite the perishing of the body.

Believers in the immortal-soul doctrine seem to feel that if a Bible writer speaks of a contrast between one part of man and another, between the body and the spirit (or soul), that proves unquestionably the truth of their doctrine. But we also believe there is a difference between body and spirit, or between body and soul. We are to glorify God in our body and in our spirit, the Scriptures declare. We simply insist that the Scriptures nowhere say that the soul, or spirit, is a distinct, a separate, immortal entity encased within a shell, the body.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian church about his being "absent in body but present in spirit." 1 Cor. 5:3. Would anyone have the hardihood to say that Paul wishes us to understand that Paul left his body one place and flitted away to another place, Corinth? Then why seek to discover the immortal-soul doctrine in his words: "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day"?

In several passages Paul speaks, in variant language, of this "inward man." To the Ephesians he wrote, "That he [Christ] would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Eph. 3:16, 17. Again he writes, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Col. 3:9, 10.

It is evident that the "inward man," or "inner man," is, in the case of the Christian, known as the "new man." And what is this "new man"? The new nature, the new heart and spirit, that comes

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to us when, on accepting Christ, our "old man," or old nature, is crucified. As Paul declares, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20. The "inward man" is renewed daily by the presence of the indwelling Christ who causes us to grow constantly in spiritual stature even though the body may be wasting away.

So far from proving the immortal-soul doctrine, 2 Corinthians 4:16 is not even discussing the subject of immortality.

Objection 72

When Stephen was martyred he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Acts 7:59. Christ on the cross said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Luke 23:46. This proves that at death the real man, that immortal entity called the "spirit," departs from the body.

The word here translated "spirit" is from the Greek word *pneuma*, which is true of virtually every use of "spirit" in the New Testament. The primary meaning of *pneuma* is "wind, air," and because life is associated so inextricably with the air we breathe, *pneuma* may also mean "life." There is nothing in the word *pneuma* that suggests an immaterial, conscious entity.

Stephen did not pray, "Receive *me*." This is most significant, for surely in this prayer the real man is speaking, not just the shell, the body. If Stephen believed that the righteous go to heaven at death, we should rightly expect him to pray, "Receive *me* up into glory." But Stephen, the animate being, still conscious, though dying, committed something to Christ, his *pneuma*, his life.

Stephen knew that his life was a gift from God. He would say, as did Job, "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job 33:4. This great gift was about to leave him, and he wished to commit to the keeping of God that which he could no longer retain. He believed the truth, later penned by Paul: "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:3, 4. Stephen knew that at the resurrection day he again would receive life, *immortal* life.

Much of what has just been said regarding Stephen's words applies, most evidently, to Christ's words also. He commended to the keeping of His Father the life He was about to lay down for the sins of the world. On the resurrection morning the angel of God called Him forth from Joseph's new tomb, to take up once more that life He had voluntarily laid down.

Objection 73

Hebrews 12:23 proves that man has a spirit, which is the real man, and that with this spirit we shall have fellowship in our perfected state. In other words, this text proves that disembodied spirits dwell in celestial bliss.

The passage in its context reads as follows: "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. 12:22-24.

The writer of Hebrews, who, it is believed, was Paul, is here contrasting the state of the Christian under the new covenant with the state of the self-confident, and soon rebellious, Israelites under the old covenant. The contrast begins with the eighteenth verse: "For ye are not come unto the mount [Sinai] that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest." "But ye are come unto mount Sion." Verse 22.

We should remember first that the prime purpose of this whole book of Hebrews is to show the superiority of the new covenant relationship over the old, the superiority of Christ's sacrifice and ministration for the believer over that of the Mosaic priests for the Jews. Hence, in the passage before us we may rightly presume that Paul is making another of his contrasting statements, and that in verses 22 and 23 he is describing a company on this earth, not in heaven. Paul would hardly be guilty of laboring so evident a point as that heaven is superior to earth. But to the Hebrews it was necessary often to remind them that though the Mosaic dispensation was glorious, even awesome and magnificent, when con-

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sidered in the setting of God's presence at Sinai, nevertheless the Christian dispensation was more glorious. That he is describing a company of Christians in the Christian Era, and not a company in heaven, is further revealed by the fact that he says, "Ye are come . . . to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." To those who finally reach heaven Christ is no longer the priestly mediator of any covenant. The saved in heaven will not be in need of a mediator.

Though the language is in part figurative, it is not difficult to see that Paul is describing the state of the believer in Christ in this world. Note the following:

1. "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Compare with this Peter's words: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." 1 Peter 2:4-6.

2. "To an innumerable company of angels." When we are drawn into the circle of heaven we draw near to the angels. Also, when we become children of God His holy angels minister to us. (See Heb. 1:14.)

3. "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." Christ set up His church in the world, and to that we come when we accept Him.

4. "And to God the Judge of all." Compare with this other statements by Paul: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace." Heb. 4:16. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Heb. 7:25.

Without taking the parallels further it is evident that Paul is describing the life of the Christian here in this world. Distinguishing features of that life are the fellowships he has with—

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1. "An innumerable company of angels."
2. "The general assembly and church of the firstborn."
3. "God the Judge of all."
4. "The spirits of just men made perfect."
5. "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant."

Now, while we are on earth, attending church, communing with God and our Saviour Jesus, with what kind of "men" do we associate? Disembodied spirits? No. Then what does the phrase "The spirits of just men" mean? We believe that the most simple explanation, one wholly consistent with Scripture, is that Paul is telling us that the Christian communes with his fellow Christian on the spiritual level. Our meeting with other Christians is not on a carnal, earthy plane, as was true of the pagans at the time Paul wrote.

This contrast between flesh and spirit is frequently made by Paul. For example, his words to the Romans: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. 8:5-8.

Christ said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3:6, 7.

Paul and Christ are both speaking of the converted man who is still walking this earth in flesh and blood. But in contrast to "flesh," which is a synonym for our sin-contaminated nature, they use the word "spirit" as a general term to describe the "born again" man who has a spiritual nature and who is controlled by the Spirit of God. But there is nothing airy, ghostly, immaterial, about this "born again" man, even though it is said of him: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." He sits in a pew in the church on the Sabbath day!

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It is true that the majority of Bible commentators, looking at this difficult passage—and they all admit that verses 22 to 24 are somewhat difficult—through the eyes of their immortal-soul doctrine, understand verse 23 to refer to departed saints. That is what makes so significant the admissions, by some of them, that this verse refers to Christians living in this present world. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, in their comment on this text, remark:

“Spirit and spirits are used of a man or men in the body, under the influence of the spirit the opposite of flesh. (John 3.6.)”

Adam Clarke, Methodist commentator, remarks on this text:

“The spirits of the just men made perfect, or the righteous perfect, are the full grown Christians; those who are justified by the blood and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Being come to such, implies that spiritual union which the disciples of Christ have with each other, and which they possess how far soever separate; for they are all joined in one spirit, Eph. ii.18; they are in the unity of the spirit, Eph. iv.3, 4; and of one soul. Acts iv.32.”

Objection 74

Paul makes it clear that it was possible for him to be "out of the body." This proves that the real man is an immaterial soul, or spirit, that is independent of the body. (See 2 Cor. 12:2, 3.)

The passage, in its context, reads thus: "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." 2 Cor. 12:1-4.

The first fact that we wish to make clear is this: According to the believers in the immortal-soul doctrine, the departure of the soul from the body takes place at the instant of death, that indeed such a departure must result in death to the body. Indeed, two of their proof texts are supposed to support this very contention that death marks the departure of the soul: "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (for she died)." Gen. 35:18. "And the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." 1 Kings 17:22. (See objection 81 for a study of these texts.)

Hence, following such reasoning, if Paul was "out of the body," he died! But is any believer in soul immortality really willing to admit that Paul is saying that he does not know whether or not he died at a certain time "above fourteen years ago"? And, of course, if he died, then he must have been afterward raised, or rather his body must have been raised, when he returned from "the third heaven." Here, indeed, would be something most remarkable for Paul to write about, but he makes no allusion anywhere in his writings to his having died and been resurrected.

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Obviously, there must be something wrong with an interpretation of Paul's words that would produce so startling a conclusion.

But we are not required to follow any such reasoning. Paul is speaking of "visions and revelations." What he saw and heard was so real and vivid that he was not certain but that God might actually have transported him to heaven for the brief period of the revelation. And yet he would not affirm it as a fact. Obviously, the other alternative was that he had simply seen a vision and heard in that vision the revelation which it was "not lawful" for him to repeat. But if he was not literally taken to heaven in body, he seemed to be there nevertheless, and naturally he might describe that state as being "out of the body." Indeed, how better could one express the thought of being in a far-off place without literally going there?

In writing to the Colossian church Paul uses this very same kind of language: "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." Col. 2:5.

We have no trouble understanding these words of Paul. No one finds in them any proof of an immortal, airy entity called a soul. In fact, we may write to a friend with whom it will not be possible for us to be on a certain important occasion: "I'll be with you in spirit." But none of us, including the objector, believes that when we speak thus we mean that an immortal entity within us will flit away at a certain time to be with the friend. Then why should anyone think that Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:2, 3 is teaching the doctrine of disembodied spirits?

Objection 75

The apostle Paul says that at the second coming of Christ God will bring with Him from heaven those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. (See 1 Thess. 4:14.) This proves that the righteous go to heaven at death instead of lying in the grave until the Second Advent.

The text reads as follows: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." 1 Thess. 4:14. In the verses immediately preceding and following, Paul discusses two groups: (1) "them which are asleep" and (2) "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." In his discussion he sought to accomplish five things:

1. Assure them that they need not "sorrow" as the pagans about them did, "which have no hope." Verse 13.

2. Inform them that the living saints would not "prevent [precede] them which are asleep" as regards being taken to glory. Verse 15.

3. Inform them how "them which are asleep" will be awakened; namely, "the trump of God" shall cause them to "rise." Verse 16.

4. Inform them what happens immediately following the resurrection: The living saints are "caught up together with them [the resurrected saints] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Verse 17.

5. Inform them of the state of the living and resurrected saints subsequent to meeting their Lord: "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." Verse 17.

Now if the righteous dead are to "*rise*" at a future resurrection date, and together with the living saints then go heavenward to dwell forever with the Lord, how can Paul possibly be declaring in verse 14 that the righteous dead come *down* from heaven at the great resurrection day? The only way the believer in soul immor-

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tality can harmonize his interpretation of verse 14 with the related verses is to declare that the souls of the saints ascended heavenward at death and that these souls come down with the Lord at the resurrection day to receive their resurrected bodies.

The prime weakness in this explanation is that it assumes what is to be proved. The objector submits this passage in Thessalonians to prove the immortal-soul doctrine, and then proceeds to *assume* that there is such a thing as an immaterial entity, an immortal soul, in order to escape from a hopeless conflict between verse 14, as interpreted by him, and the succeeding verses!

But his assumption can easily be shown to be not even plausible. Here is how the righteous dead are described:

Verse 13: "Them which are asleep."

Verse 14: "Them also which sleep in Jesus."

Verse 16: "The dead in Christ."

By what rule of language is it proper to say that in verse 14 Paul is speaking only of the souls of the saints, whereas in verses 13 and 16 he is speaking only of their bodies?

Most evidently the interpretation given to verse 14 must be wrong. What is Paul there seeking to establish? To assure the believers that the resurrection was a certainty. The certainty of the resurrection was the key point that the apostles stressed in their preaching. First, the certainty that Christ was raised from the dead, and then because of that, the certainty that we also will be freed from the prison house of death. Listen to Paul argue the case:

"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . . But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." 1 Cor. 15:14-23.

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His reasoning sums up thus: Unless we believe that Christ rose from the grave we have no hope of a resurrection. Christ rose as the firstfruits from the grave, and "afterward they that are Christ's" will be raised "at his coming."

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul thus describes God: "The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." Heb. 13:20.

In the light of these and related passages we have no difficulty in finding an interpretation for 1 Thessalonians 4:14 that harmonizes with the whole context of that chapter and with Paul's whole argument elsewhere regarding the resurrection. The verse is in two parts:

1. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again."
2. "Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

Paul is here simply presenting the case for the certainty of our resurrection on the ground that Christ was raised. Now it was God "that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." "Even so" "will God bring with him [Jesus]" from the grave "them also which sleep in Jesus." "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

It becomes plain, therefore, that Paul teaches in 1 Thessalonians 4:14, not the immortal-soul doctrine, but the great doctrine of the resurrection.

Objection 76

We agree that those who died in Old Testament days remained unconscious in their graves, as the Old Testament Scriptures prove. (See, for example, Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10.) But when Christ came He declared that "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." John 11:26. This proves that in the New Testament times those who believe in Christ do not die, but go direct to heaven. In support of this conclusion is Paul's declaration that Christ "abolished death" (2 Tim. 1:10), also the repeated statements of Scripture that the Christian now possesses everlasting life.

Well may the objector admit that the Old Testament worthies did not go to their heavenly reward at death, but lie silent yet in the grave. The Scriptural evidence is overwhelming. On the day of Pentecost, Peter said to the multitude: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." "For David is not ascended into the heavens." Acts 2:29, 34.

But this admission regarding these good men of Old Testament days is fatal to the whole case for the immortal-soul doctrine. Why do most Christian people believe that a Christian goes to heaven at death? Because they believe that there resides within man an immortal soul, and that the soul of the man who is a Christian must of course go to heaven at the time the man's body goes to the grave. Then, we would ask: Did righteous men begin to have immortal souls *only* at the beginning of the Christian Era? We have never heard that idea set forth seriously by any exponent of the immortal-soul doctrine. But if men have always had immortal souls, then what happened to the souls of the holy men of Old Testament times when they died? It is really a denial of the whole immortal-soul doctrine to say that the souls of those ancient worthies stayed in the grave! An immortal, *conscious* entity, the real man, lying in the dust for ages! That idea passes credulity, no one really believes it.

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We think that some definite position should be taken by the objector, for how can we hope to give an answer unless we really know what he affirms. If he takes the position that the Old Testament worthies did have immortal souls, which is the standard teaching in almost all Christendom, then he really denies that position by his admission that these worthies "remained unconscious in their graves." But if he affirms that those worthies did not have immortal souls, then the heavy burden of proof rests on him to present clear Scriptural proof that Christ, when He came to earth, gave to believers from that time onward immortal souls, so that instead of remaining "unconscious in their graves" they go directly to heaven at death. Apparently he takes this latter position, and offers in proof of his position John 11:26.

Before we examine specifically this text we wish, first, to show that the Bible makes no distinction between the state in death of Old Testament and New Testament holy men. Note this parallel:

Old Testament Saints

"And these [holy men of Old Testament times] all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Heb. 11:39, 40.

New Testament Saints

"We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout . . . : and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." 1 Thess. 4:15-17.

As regards the Old Testament saints, they must await a future date for their reward, and that date is when all God's elect are ready. We are to be given our reward together.

When Paul writes to the Thessalonian church "concerning them which are asleep," that they "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13), he was discussing New Testament saints who had died. He does not here teach that their fellow believers who had died—"are asleep"—had gone to meet

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their Lord. On the contrary, he sought to make clear to them that the righteous living at the last great day would not precede to glory those who "are asleep." We are to go to our reward together. Which is exactly what Paul, in Hebrews, teaches regarding the Old Testament saints in relation to the New Testament ones!

Thus we conclude that there is no difference between Old and New Testament saints as regards the time when they go to heaven. We find reinforcement of this conclusion in the words of John, who thus speaks of Christians in the last days of earth's history: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Rev. 14:13. Hence we come inevitably to the conclusion that whatever Christ was seeking to teach in John 11:26, He was not seeking to tell His followers that beginning then, they, in contrast to the ancient worthies, would escape death, would possess an immortal soul, and thus would go to heaven at death.

Then what was He seeking to tell Martha when He said to her, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die"? This is not a lone passage. We find Him saying to the Jews, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." John 8:51.

We believe that the explanation is this: When God first placed man on the earth He warned him against the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:17. Some have wondered how that judgment was fulfilled, inasmuch as Adam lived on for centuries after he ate the forbidden fruit. But the reasonable answer is that on the day Adam ate the fruit he came under the condemnation of death. His fate was there irrevocably fixed. Thus in the sight of God, who thinks rather of the ultimate end than of the relatively transient period before judgment is executed, Adam could be considered dead the moment he ate.

It is in this sense that we understand Paul's words, for example, where he tells the Colossian church that before they accepted Christ they were "dead" in their "sins." (Col. 2:13.) Also his words

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descriptive of a dissolute woman: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Tim. 5:6.

Contrast with these and similar texts the words of our Lord: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24. Note also the words of John: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." 1 John 3:14. Then take the words of Paul: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Rom. 8:6.

How evident that the Bible writers consider man as being in one or the other of two states, lost or saved, and that moving from one state to the other is passing "from death unto life."

Add to these Scriptural facts another: The Bible speaks of two deaths and two resurrections. We read the promise: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev. 2:11. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." Rev. 20:6. But this is simply another way of saying that the first death does have power, even over the righteous. The "second death" is the death suffered by those who are cast "into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Rev. 21:8.

The first death brings all men into graves in the earth, where all sleep until they are resurrected at the end of time, the righteous in the first resurrection, the wicked in the second. Christ describes the first as the "resurrection of *life*," the second, as the "resurrection of *damnation*." Obviously, then, the first death is as it were a "sleep," for there is a certain and sure awakening. (See Dan. 12:2.) But not so with the second death, which brings wicked men into the lake of fire, that burns them up so that there is left of them "neither root nor branch." (Mal. 4:1.)

That is why the Bible, in speaking of the righteous of all ages, declares, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." Such persons "die in the Lord" (Rev. 14:13), they "sleep

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in Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:14), and come forth in the first resurrection to dwell forevermore with their Lord.

But the wicked, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), dwell under "condemnation" of death (John 5:24); they are dead even while they live (1 Tim. 5:6); they go down into Christless graves, rise in the resurrection to receive judgment, and go down in the "second death" (Rev. 21:8).

When we see Christ's statement in John 11:26 in this setting we have no difficulty in understanding it. We do not have to give His words a strained interpretation. We do not have to make ourselves believe the plainly un-Scriptural idea that there is a difference between Old and New Testament saints. We do not have to reject the evidence of our senses and claim that when the Christian goes down into the grave he really goes to heaven. We simply understand Christ to mean that those who accept His proffered salvation are freed from the penalty of death that hangs over all men and will never suffer that "second death," which is death in the ultimate sense of the word, for there is no return from it. Indeed, the "second death" is the opposite of eternal life, which is the gift given to the Christian. Of the one who has eternal life, or everlasting life, it can be said that the "second death" has no power over him.

Christ declared to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John 5:40. But the Christian has accepted Christ, who is the life, into his heart. That is why he has everlasting life abiding in him. When the Christian dies he commends to God his life, as did the martyr Stephen, then sleeps in Jesus against the day of the "resurrection of life." Such a one never truly sees or experiences death. He experiences only a little time of sleep.

Adam Clarke, Methodist theologian, in his commentary, says this in comment on the phrase "shall never die":

"Shall not die for ever. Though he die a temporal death, he shall not continue under its power for ever; but shall have a resurrection to life eternal."

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In the light of the foregoing, Paul's statement that Christ "abolished death" (2 Tim. 1:10) may most naturally be understood to mean this: Christ, having risen from the grave, has the victory over death, and has provided thereby absolute assurance that it will be abolished. Paul makes clear that the actual abolition of death awaits the second coming of Christ, when the righteous dead are raised. Then it is that "death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. 15:54.

Compare with Paul's words John's description of the final consuming fires that are to burn up every trace of sin: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:14. Then, and not until then, will death truly be "abolished." Christ's resurrection made certain the abolition of death, even as it made certain the resurrection of all who have died in Christ. But even as the resurrection of the righteous awaits the end of the world, even so the abolition of death awaits that great hour.

Objection 77

In Matthew 22:32 Christ declares that He is not the God of the dead but of the living. Yet He said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." This proves that the souls of these patriarchs, who died long ago, are really alive in heaven.

Let us look at this passage of Scripture in its context. We read that there came to Christ "the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection." Matt. 22:23. Mark introduces the incident in exactly the same language. (Mark 12:18.) Luke says, "The Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection." Luke 20:27. Hence we may properly conclude that the only point at issue in the discussion that the Sadducees raised on this occasion was whether or not there was to be a resurrection.

That this was the one point at issue is made even more clear by the hypothetical case that the Sadducees described and the question they asked. They cited Moses' command that if a man's brother die without children, he should marry the widow and raise up seed to his brother. Now, said they, a man died, his brother married the widow, then the brother died, and another brother married the widow, and so on through seven brothers, with the seventh finally dying, and afterward the woman dying. Then comes the Sadducees' question: "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her." Matt. 22:28.

The Sadducees, who affirmed their belief in Moses and their disbelief in the resurrection, apparently thought that they had asked an unanswerable question and therefore had proved incredible the idea of a resurrection. Christ dissolved the dilemma by declaring, "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage." Verse 30. Note that the discussion continues to focus on a certain future event, "the resurrection."

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Now, strictly speaking, though Christ had dissolved the dilemma, He had not thereby given a Scriptural proof that there is to be a resurrection, which was the real point at issue, for the Sadducees, as fervently as the Pharisees, affirmed their belief in the books of Moses. Hence Christ proceeds immediately to offer proof that the dead will be raised: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Matt. 22:31, 32. Mark introduces Christ's proof with similar language: "And as touching the dead, that they rise." Mark 12:26. Luke records, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed." Luke 20:37.

But for some reason the believers in the immortal-soul doctrine believe that "Moses shewed" and that Christ quoted Moses to show, not that "the dead are raised," but that their immortal souls have *never* died! There have always been those who believed that at death an airy entity leaves the body, who did not therefore believe that there would ever be a bodily resurrection. Belief in the one does not logically necessitate belief in the other. Hence, if Christ simply proved that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then living as immortal souls in bliss, He did not thereby prove that there would be a resurrection.

But, as we have seen, the question at issue was, Will there be a resurrection? Did Christ answer the question? Did He prove that there would be a resurrection? It surely gives small honor to our Lord to reason that He did not, when He expressly declared that His reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was intended to prove "that the dead are raised." We prefer to conclude that the Lord proved His point rather than that the immortal-soul advocates have proved theirs! We cannot conclude that both have!

Only one question remains for examination: If "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," then must not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob be living? The answer is found in the discussion of the preceding objection (No. 76). Indeed, that objection, so

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confidently brought forward to show that when Christ came an undying quality was given to Christians, is really the refutation of the whole objection before us. Under objection 76 evidence was presented to show that the believer in God has "passed from death unto life" and that therefore God does not regard his sleep in the grave as eternal, but only as a little interval between the earthly life and the heavenly.

That God does speak in terms of the assured future as though it were already present, is clearly stated by Paul: "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." Rom. 4:17. This statement is made in relation to Abraham! Again, take Paul's words regarding all Christians: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." Rom. 14:7-9. And why are we still "the Lord's," even though we die? Because we "sleep in Jesus," and the "dead in Christ shall rise" in the "resurrection of life." (1 Thess. 4:14, 16; John 5:29.)

Only as we understand the matter in this way do we avoid a conflict between two texts of Scripture: (1) "God is not the God of the dead," and Christ is (2) "Lord both of the dead and living." In the first Christ is speaking to the Sadducees, who held that all men, good as well as bad, suffered eternal extinction at death. In the second Paul is speaking of those who have died in "the Lord," and who thus simply "sleep" for a little while till they are called forth at the resurrection of life. God is indeed the God of all who thus have died.

Objection 78

Ecclesiastes 12:7 proves that there is a conscious, immortal entity that leaves the body at death. (See also Eccl. 3:21.)

Ecclesiastes 12:7 reads, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." This text speaks of the dissolution of man at death. We cannot accept the belief that this "spirit" is a conscious entity that is released at death and soars away, because:

1. If this "spirit" is a conscious entity when it "*returns*" to God, then it was a conscious entity when it *came* from God. The construction of the text demands this, for it gives us the specific statement that the dust returns to the earth "as it was," and unless otherwise stated, it would follow that the spirit returns as *it* was. In fact, for the believer in immortal souls to declare that the "spirit" needed lodgment within the so-called shell of the body to possess consciousness, would be to surrender the whole argument.

Now, the Bible teaches the pre-existence of Christ before He was born in Bethlehem. But the view stated in the objection before us would demand the astounding conclusion that all the members of the human family, as spirits, had an existence before they were born on this earth. This makes good Mormon theology, with its unseen world of spirits waiting for human bodies in order to find abodes on this earth. But it is to be doubted whether any orthodox Christian could bring himself to accept this view.

2. If the "spirit" which returns to God is a conscious entity, and thus the real man, then all men, whether good or bad, go to God at death. Are all to have the same destination? If it be said that the wicked go to God simply to receive judgment, we would reply that the Bible states definitely that the judgment is still a future event. (See Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 22:12.)

3. Of the creation of man we read, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."

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Job 33:4. Job thus describes his state of being alive: "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job 27:3. The act of dying is set forth in these words: "If he [God] set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." Job 34:14, 15. The spirit returns because it came from God and because God gathers it to Himself.

The whole cycle indicates nowhere a conscious entity, exercising a free will to go to God. On the contrary, the Bible declares that God gathers "unto himself *his* spirit." If this returning spirit is the real man, then we would be forced to believe that certain pagan religions are right when they teach that man is but a manifestation of the Divine Spirit, and at death is absorbed again into that one great Spirit. We cannot accept this pagan view, which means that we cannot accept the view set forth in the objection based on Ecclesiastes 12:7.

The answer to this objection is really an answer also to the objection based on Ecclesiastes 3:21, which reads as follows: "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Because this text says that man's spirit goes upward and the beast's downward at death, we are supposed to conclude that therefore man, in contrast to the beast, has an immortal soul, or spirit, that soars heavenward at death.

But such reasoning requires that at death all men go "upward" to heaven. We have always understood that those who believe in the immortality of the soul teach that at death the wicked go "downward" to hell. This text proves more than they wish it to prove. If Solomon is here teaching that the "spirit of man" means an immortal entity, the real man, then he is teaching that all men will be saved. But that doctrine, called universalism, has ever been considered by both Protestants and Catholics as rank heresy.

Furthermore, to reason that this text proves man's immortality because it seems to contrast the "spirit of man" with the "spirit of the beast," is to make Solomon contradict himself. In the imme-

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diately preceding verses he explicitly states that as regards their destination at death, there is no difference between man and beast: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, *they have all one breath*; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Eccl. 3:19, 20.

Solomon says that "they have all one breath." The Hebrew word here translated "breath" is *ruach*. The word "spirit" that is used twice in the twenty-first verse—"the spirit of man," "the spirit of the beast"—is also from this same Hebrew word *ruach*.

The objector may now remark that Solomon is therefore contradicting himself. In verses 19 and 20 he argues that "a man hath no preeminence above a beast," and then in verse 21 he declares that man's spirit goes upward, in contrast to the beast's, which proves that man does have a pre-eminence.

But whenever, in Scripture, there is an apparent contradiction, we need to look a little deeper, and perhaps to compare the translation that we commonly use with other translations. Since our common version of the Scriptures, known as the King James Version, was translated in A.D. 1611 many more old manuscripts of the Bible have been discovered, which help us in many instances better to understand what a Bible writer is saying. Thus with the passage before us. In the American Standard Version, commonly known as the Revised Version, verse 21 reads, "Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?"

This translation of Solomon's words in verse 21 permits complete harmony with what he has declared in the preceding verses. And with this question in verse 21 placed in the setting of the preceding verses, it is evident that Solomon does not intend the reader to understand that there is any difference in the destination of the spirit (*ruach*) of man and beast. His question simply constitutes a challenge to anyone to provide proof, if he can, that there is a difference in destination.

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And why should there be any difference? All life comes from God, no matter whether that life is displayed in man or in the humblest animal. That is sound Christian doctrine. At death the life, which is a gift from God, returns to God. This follows logically from the preceding statement. Where believers in the immortal-soul doctrine find themselves in perplexity is that they define the word "spirit" (*ruach*), when it is used in relation to man, as an immortal entity, the real man; but when the word "spirit" (*ruach*) is used in relation to beasts, they are content to define it abstractly as the principle of life, the breath of life. They must make this arbitrary distinction in definition, else one of two dilemmas confronts them: (1) Either man and beasts both have within them an immortal entity, (2) or neither man nor beasts are possessed of such an entity.

Seventh-day Adventists find no necessity of making arbitrary differences in definition of a word. We see in such a passage as Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 a simple statement that life from God is given to all, man and beasts, and that at death that life returns to God. We do not need to invent a difference in definitions for "spirit" (*ruach*) in order to preserve a clear difference between man and beasts. We believe that man was made in "the image of God," which the beasts were not. We believe that man has a moral nature, which the beasts have not. We believe that man may have communion with God, which the beasts cannot. We believe that man will answer at a final judgment day for all his deeds, which the beasts will not. Finally, we believe that man may ultimately be translated to dwell with God in an earth made new, which the beasts will not. But we believe that this is possible for man, not because of an immortal entity within him, but because of a resurrection from the dead.

Objection 79

That the righteous dead go to heaven immediately at death, and that man therefore possesses an immortal spirit, is evident from Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:8. (See also 2 Peter 1:14.)

The passage in its context reads as follows: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." 2 Cor. 5:1-9.

Paul here deals with three possible states:

1. "Our earthly house." "At home in the body." "Absent from the Lord." This house can be "dissolved." "In this we groan."
2. "Unclothed." "Naked."
3. "A building of God." "House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Our house which is from heaven." "Clothed upon." "Present with the Lord." "Absent from the body."

If the "earthly house" means our present, mortal body, as all agree, then unless there is clear proof to the contrary, it would logically follow that our heavenly house is the immortal body. And thus by a process of elimination the "unclothed," "naked,"

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state can mean none other than that state of dissolution known as death.

We are assured of the desired third state because we have “the earnest [pledge] of the Spirit.” Verse 5. But how will God’s Spirit finally ensure our reaching this desired state? Paul answers, “If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also *quicken your mortal bodies* by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Rom. 8:11.

The learned Dr. H. C. G. Moule well says:

“That same Spirit, who, by uniting us to Christ, made actual our redemption, shall surely, in ways to us unknown, carry the process to its glorious crown, and be somehow the Efficient Cause of ‘the redemption of our body.’ ”—*The Expositor’s Bible*, comment on Romans 8:11.

Now, if the fulfilling to us of that pledge of the Spirit is the change that takes place in our “mortal bodies” at the resurrection, then we must conclude that the change to the third state, that of being “clothed upon” with the heavenly house, comes at the resurrection, and is the change in our bodies from mortal to immortal.

Paul declares further: “We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Rom. 8:22, 23. That he is here dealing with the same problem as in 2 Corinthians 5 is evident:

Romans 8:22, 23

“Groan within ourselves.”
“Firstfruits of the Spirit.”
“Waiting for.”
“Redemption of our body.”

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

“We groan.”
“Earnest of the Spirit.”
“Earnestly desiring.”
“Clothed upon” with heavenly house.

Thus we conclude again that the change from the “earthly house” to the “house which is from heaven” is an event that involves the “redemption of our body,” which “redemption,” all agree, occurs at the resurrection day. (See also Phil. 3:20, 21.)

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The apostle states that he longs to be "clothed upon" with the heavenly house, "*that mortality might be swallowed up of life*," or, as the American Revised Version states it, "that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life." 2 Cor. 5:4. In other words, "what is mortal" loses its mortality by this change.

According to the immortal-soul doctrine, "what is mortal" is the body only, which at death dissolves in the grave; but the soul simply continues on in its immortal state, freed from the mortal body. But Paul longs to be "clothed" with the heavenly house, "that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life." Thus by their own tenets the immortal-soul advocates must agree that Paul in this passage is not dealing with an experience that takes place at death. We might therefore close the discussion at this point.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul declared, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." When? "At the last trump." And what will take place? "The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." And what will result from this? "*When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*" 1 Cor. 15:51-54. This last phrase parallels the language in 2 Corinthians 5: "What is mortal [or subject to death] may be swallowed up of life." The swallowing up of death, or mortality, is still a future event.

That Paul expected to be "clothed upon" with the heavenly house at the resurrection day is the certain conclusion from all his statements. Being "present with the Lord" is contingent upon being "clothed" with the heavenly house. Therefore the being "present with the Lord" awaits the resurrection day. How beautifully this agrees with the apostle's statement to the Thessalonians, that at the *resurrection* we are caught up "to meet the Lord," and "so shall we ever be *with the Lord.*" 1 Thess. 4:17.

If it seems strange to some that Paul should speak of putting off one "house" and putting on another when he meant simply

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the change in his body from mortal to immortal, we would remind them that he uses a similar figure of speech when describing the change that takes place in the heart at conversion. He declares that we should "put off . . . the old man," and "put on the new man." (Eph. 4:22-24.)

The fact that Paul coupled together the being freed from the earthly house and the being clothed upon with the heavenly does not prove that he expected an *immediate* transfer from one to the other. He makes specific reference to an "unclothed," a "naked," state. On the question of immediate transfer, the reader is referred to the discussion of Philippians 1:21-23 under objection 83.

With propriety might Paul "groan" for the day when he could put off this mortal body, with all the evils suggested by it, and could put on, be "clothed upon" with, the promised immortal body, in which body he would be ready "to meet" and to "ever be with the Lord."

In the light of the foregoing we need not spend much time on 2 Peter 1:14, which is also mentioned by the objector. The passage in its context reads as follows: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." 2 Peter 1:13-15.

The reasoning of the immortal-soul advocate here runs about as follows: Peter said that he dwelt in a tabernacle, and that "I must put off this *my* tabernacle." Therefore, this proves that Peter had an immortal soul, indicated by the "I" and "my," and that he, looking at his body, his tabernacle, thought of it as something apart from himself.

We are all agreed that Peter refers to his death when he speaks of putting "off this tabernacle." Christ spoke to him as to his death: "When *thou* wast young, *thou* girded thyself, and walkedst whither *thou* wouldest: but when *thou* shalt be old, *thou* shalt stretch forth *thy* hands, and another shall gird *thee*, and carry *thee*

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whither *thou* wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he [Peter] should glorify God." John 21:18, 19.

Notice that here Christ does not make a distinction between Peter and his "tabernacle," as though they were two, and separate. And John, in recording this forecast of Peter's martyrdom, speaks of the "death *he* should die." Not Peter's "tabernacle" dying, but "he" dying. This agrees with Peter's own words: "After *my* decease." We agree with the objector that the "I" and the "my" of verse 14 refer to Peter. But is it not equally evident that the "my" of verse 15 also refers to Peter? Yes. But in this verse Peter says, "My *decease*." When Peter is allowed to speak for himself, the apparent case for the immortal-soul doctrine disappears—immortal entities do not suffer decease.

Objection 80

Man is made in the image of God; God is immortal; therefore man is immortal.

Why should only one of God's attributes, that of immortality, be singled out for comparison? God is all-powerful. Does it therefore follow that man, made in the image of God, is also all-powerful? God is all-wise. Is man therefore possessed of boundless wisdom, because made in God's image?

The Bible uses the word "immortality" only five times, and the word "immortal" only once. In this lone instance the term is applied to God: "Eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." 1 Tim. 1:17. The five references that contain the word "immortality" are as follows:

1. Romans 2:7. In this text the Christian is exhorted to "seek" for immortality. Why should he seek for it if he already possesses it? In this same book of Romans, Paul quotes the prophet Elijah as saying of his enemies, "They seek my life." We understand from this that the prophet's enemies did not yet have his life in their hands. Therefore, when we are exhorted to seek for immortality, for a life that knows no end, we must conclude that we do not now possess such a life.

2. 2 Timothy 1:10. Here we learn that Christ "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." The only deduction from this is that so far from immortality's being a natural possession of all men, it is one of the good things made possible through the gospel. Paul wrote, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." Rom. 6:23. Why would we need this gift if we already had undying souls?

3. 1 Corinthians 15:53. This passage tells when we shall receive immortality. The time is "at the last trump." Then "this mortal must put on immortality." Why should the apostle Paul

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speaking of our putting on immortality at a future date if we already possess it?

4. 1 Corinthians 15:54. This verse simply adds the thought that when "this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

5. 1 Timothy 6:16. Here we learn that God "only hath immortality." This final text settles the matter as conclusively as words could possibly do, and explains fully why we are exhorted to "seek" immortality, and why we are told that immortality is something that is to be "put on" "at the last trump."

Not only do we learn from these texts that we do not have immortality, but also we are told that God alone has it.

There are other texts which contain in the original Greek the same word that is translated "immortal" or "immortality" in the six texts we have just considered. But these additional texts do not require us to change our conclusion; on the contrary they strengthen it. Take, for example, Romans 1:23, where Paul, speaking of the idolatrous action of the heathen, says that they "changed the glory of the uncorruptible [immortal] God into an image made like to corruptible [mortal] man." In the Greek, the word here translated "uncorruptible" is the same as that rendered "immortal" in 1 Timothy 1:17: "Eternal, *immortal*, invisible, the only wise God." The Expositor's Bible translates the passage thus: "Transmuted the glory of the immortal God in a semblance of the likeness of mortal man." The uncorruptible, the immortal God is sharply contrasted with corruptible, mortal man.

We read in John 5:26 that the "Father hath life in himself," and that He hath "given to the Son to have life in himself." But nowhere do we read that God gave to human beings to have life in themselves. That is why the Bible never speaks of man as immortal.

Objection 81

The Bible describes the death of Rachel by saying that “her soul was in departing.” Gen. 35:18. (See also 1 Kings 17:21, 22.)

The reference from First Kings deals with the account of a child that died, and of how the prophet Elijah prayed: “O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child’s soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.”

These accounts of the child and of Rachel may be examined together. The explanation of one is obviously the explanation of the other.

The claim is that the “soul” that departed was the real person that soared away at death, leaving behind only the shell, the body; in other words, that really Rachel and the child departed. But such a view does not fit with the Bible description of the child’s death. Elijah did not pray that the child return and re-enter his body, but “let this child’s soul come into *him* again.” “And the soul of the child came into *him* again, and *he* revived.” The next sentence says that “Elijah took the child, and brought *him* down out of the chamber,” and gave him to his mother. The lifeless form is called “the-child,” or “him,” and the revived boy being led by the prophet to his mother is described in exactly the same language. This complete failure of the Bible writer to use any difference in language in referring to the child before and after the resurrection miracle is but typical of Bible writers throughout.

For example, take the Lord’s statement to Adam: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” Gen. 3:19. We all agree that God is addressing Adam. The personal pronoun “thou” could have no other meaning. But the whole sentence reads thus: “In the sweat of thy face shalt *thou* eat bread, till *thou* return unto the ground; for out of it wast *thou* taken: for dust *thou* art, and unto dust shalt *thou* return.”

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What rule of language permits the pronoun "thou" to have its correct personal meaning in the first part of a sentence and a different, an impersonal, value in the remainder of the sentence? If the Lord, as we believe, really wished to inform Adam that he, not merely the so-called shell of a body, would return to the ground, could any plainer language have been used? Now if, in order to support a belief, it is necessary to give personal and impersonal values to one and the same pronoun when addressed to a single person in a single sentence, there must be something the matter with that belief. If we who teach that man is mortal and lies in the grave till the resurrection, are not to be permitted to use the ordinary rules of language and the most obvious meaning of words in presenting our view from the Bible, then of course we have no basis for discussion.

Perhaps believers in natural immortality think we are attempting to build too much of a case on the use of pronouns. But suppose the Lord had said to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto me." How triumphantly would they have reminded us that "thou" is a personal pronoun, and that therefore Adam was to return to God at death! Then surely we may be pardoned for calling attention to the fact that the Lord said the very opposite; namely, "*thou* return unto the ground."

Turning again, now, to Elijah and the child: If "he" and "him" mean neither he nor him in one half of the story, then this much only is certain, that personality can depart from personal pronouns. If when the child died, *he* really departed, why should the prophet pray that his "soul come into *him* again"? If at death *he* never really died, but simply departed, why should the record describe this miracle of resurrection by declaring that "*he* revived"? We despair of attempting to settle this question if personality elusively departs from personal pronouns at the ready convenience of the believers in natural immortality.

Now, what was this "soul" that departed and which, in the case of the child, came back again? The word "soul" here and in the

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case of Rachel, is a translation of the Hebrew word *nephesh*. Gesenius, generally considered the greatest of Hebrew lexicographers, gives the following as the primary meaning of the word: "1. Breath." (See Job 14:21, where *nephesh* is translated "breath.")

We surely need not offer any apology for employing the primary definition given to a word by one of the most learned of Hebrew scholars. And when we do this, the whole matter becomes simple. When Elijah prayed, "the soul [*nephesh*, breath] . . . came into him again." Thus translated, the text finds a parallel in the account of the child's death in an earlier verse: "His sickness was so sore, that there was *no breath* left in him." Verse 17. This rendering of the passage agrees absolutely with the facts set forth in the preceding chapter concerning the "breath of life." The fact that "breath" in verse 17 is from a different Hebrew word, does not affect the comparison, seeing that both Hebrew words may properly mean "breath."

When we examine the account of this child's soul (*nephesh*) in terms of the original Hebrew word, we make still another interesting discovery. This word *nephesh* is translated "life" in the following passage from the creation story: "To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life [*nephesh*], I have given every green herb for meat." Gen. 1:30. In the margin of the Bible the translators give "a living soul" as a variant rendering for *nephesh*, "life." If the *nephesh* within the child proves that he is an undying soul, then it proves the same for the beasts, the fowls, and even the creeping things.

Speaking personally, we would rather "seek" for the immortality the Bible promises the righteous at the second coming of Jesus, than to rest in the belief that this choice possession is already ours simply because there is within us something (a *nephesh*) that is also found in the beast of the field. (See page 379 for a further treatment of the word "soul.")

Objection 82

Revelation 6:9, 10 proves that the souls of the righteous dead are in heaven.

This passage of Scripture reads thus: "When He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

It is at least interesting to note, by way of introduction, that the believers in natural immortality here endeavor to prove their position by reference to the book of Revelation. Almost without exception they declare that Revelation is too mystical to be understood, whenever Seventh-day Adventists appeal to this book in support of doctrine. Does Revelation suddenly become plain and understandable when it is thought to support the belief of those who teach immortality? Do they wish in this lone passage to give a literal meaning to the words of this symbolic, prophetic book? Evidently so, for their whole argument depends for its plausibility on a literal interpretation of the texts before us. We therefore wish to ask them certain questions to discover whether they are really willing to maintain that this is a literal passage.

If the souls of the righteous soar away at death to enter immediately into eternal happiness in the presence of God, how is it that the most worthy of these, the martyrs, should be confined under an altar? Is this a particularly ideal location? Apparently not, for these souls seem to be in distress.

Why should they need to cry for vengeance on their persecutors, who had for centuries carried on these persecutions? The immortal-soul doctrine teaches that the wicked, at death, go immediately into the flames of hell. Surely the martyrs would not wish for any more terrible vengeance than this.

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The believers in natural immortality contend vigorously that Christ's story of the rich man and Lazarus should be understood literally, and not as a parable. We shall consider this story later; but we raise one query in the present connection: If heaven and hell are so near together that the good man Lazarus could actually hear from the rich man's own lips the details of his suffering, why should the martyrs need to cry for vengeance? Are we to understand that these souls were not satisfied with the sights and sounds of torture and agony which, according to popular theology, greeted their eyes and ears as they looked over into hell?

But why continue the questions further? Indeed, why should we be asked to meet this passage of Scripture at all, when various of the most learned theologians declare that the passage should not be viewed literally? For example, Albert Barnes, the well-known Presbyterian commentator, affirms:

"We are not to suppose that this *literally* occurred, and that John actually saw the souls of the martyrs beneath the altars, for the whole representation is symbolical; nor are we to suppose that the injured and the wronged in heaven actually pray for vengeance; . . . but it may be fairly inferred from this that there will be *as real* a remembrance of the wrongs of the persecuted, the injured, and the oppressed, *as if* such prayer were offered there; and that the oppressor has as much to dread from the divine vengeance *as if* those whom he has injured should cry in heaven to the God who answers prayer. . . . Every persecutor should dread the death of the persecuted *as if* he went to heaven to plead against him."—Comments on Revelation 6:10. (Italics his.)

Of course, in fairness to Barnes, we would make clear that he is a believer in soul immortality and consciousness in death, that indeed he even believes that in some fashion this passage in Revelation provides proof of that doctrine. But this does not in any way invalidate his clear-cut admission that the passage should be viewed figuratively, not literally. That is all we wish to establish from his testimony. Just how he can make this admission, and yet believe that the passage supports soul immortality, he does not explain.

Adam Clarke, the Methodist scholar, says:

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“Their *blood*, like that of Abel, cried for vengeance. . . . We sometimes say, *Blood cries for blood*.”—Comments on Revelation 6:9, 10. (*Italics his.*)

The limits of space do not permit us to discuss here the symbolical value of these texts, which form part of a very important prophecy in the Revelation. Nor is it indeed necessary, for having shown that the language is not to be understood literally, we have removed the whole basis of the argument. Even literal souls are almost too airy and vaporous for the advocates of the immortal-soul doctrine to describe or picture very satisfactorily. It would be asking too much to expect them to maintain their side of a discussion with nothing more substantial to present than symbolical souls under a symbolical altar uttering symbolical cries.

Objection 83

Paul declared that when he died he would go immediately to be with Christ. (See Phil. 1:21-23.)

The passage reads thus: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Phil. 1:21-23.

If there were no other text in the Bible that dealt with the question of the final reward of the righteous, the reader might be pardoned for concluding that Paul expected, immediately at death, to enter heaven. This much we freely grant. But we would add at once that if a lone phrase in some one text of Scripture is to be viewed by itself, the Bible would seem to teach salvation by works, prayers for the dead, and other doctrines that Protestants consider un-Scriptural.

We cannot agree with the interpretation of Paul's words as given in the objection before us. Why? Because it would make the apostle contradict himself. Paul wrote much on the subject of being with Christ. Let us examine at least a part of his writings before drawing a conclusion concerning this passage.

In another of his letters Paul goes into details as to the time when the righteous will go to "be with the Lord": "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. 4:16-18.

It is impossible to think that Paul believed that the righteous go to be with the Lord at death, since he specifically told the Thessalonians that the righteous, both the living and those raised

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from the dead, go “together” to “be with the Lord” at the Second Advent. He declared that he was writing them so that they would not be “ignorant.” It is incredible that he would leave them in ignorance as to being with Christ at death, if he thus believed. In fact, he told them the very opposite—that the righteous dead do not go to be with the Lord at death, but await the resurrection morn. If he believed that we go to be with the Lord at death, why did he fail to mention this fact when he was writing specifically to “comfort” them? He exhorted them to find their “comfort” in a future event—the resurrection.

Those ministers today who believe in immortal souls, “comfort” the bereaved with the assurance that the loved one has already gone to be with the Lord, and they declare that we who hold a contrary view deprive a sorrowing one of the greatest comfort possible. Do they therefore indict Paul also?

Again, if Paul believed that the righteous go to God at death, why did he tell the Corinthian church that the change from mortality to immortality will not take place until the “last trump”? (See 1 Cor. 15:51-54.)

Or why did he tell the Colossians that when Christ appears “*then* shall ye also appear with him in glory”? Col. 3:4.

Or why should he have said, as the time of his own “departure,” by the executioner’s sword, drew near, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me *at that day*: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”? 2 Tim. 4:8.

Yes, and why should Christ Himself tell His disciples that they would once more be with Him when He fulfilled His promise: “I will come again, and receive you unto myself”?

Yes, why should Christ have focused the attention of the troubled disciples wholly on His Second Advent if it were really true that all of them would go to be with their Lord immediately at death?

These, and other passages we could quote, are in hopeless contradiction to the interpretation placed on the words of Paul in

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the objection before us. Are we to conclude, therefore, that Scripture contradicts itself? No. Paul in his statement to the Philippians does not say *when* he expects to be with Christ. He states briefly his weariness of life's struggle, his desire to rest from the conflict, if that would cause Christ to be "magnified." But to this veteran apostle, who had so constantly preached the glorious return of Christ as the one great event beyond the grave, the falling asleep in death was immediately connected with what would occur at the awakening of the resurrection—the being "caught up" "to meet the Lord."

It is not an unusual thing for a Bible writer to couple together events that are separated by a long span of time. The Bible does not generally go into details, but concerns itself with setting forth the really important points of God's dealing with man along the course of the centuries. For example, Isaiah 61:1, 2, contains a prophecy of the work that Christ would do at His first advent. In Luke 4:17-19 is the account of Christ's reading this prophecy to the people, and informing them: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Verse 21. But a close examination will reveal that Christ did not read all the prophecy from Isaiah, though apparently it is one connected statement. He ended with the phrase: "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." But the very next phrase in the sentence is: "And the day of vengeance of our God." He did not read this, because it was not yet to be fulfilled. This passage in Isaiah does not even suggest that a period of time intervenes between this phrase and the ones preceding. But other Bible passages indicate this fact clearly, and it is by examining all these other passages that we learn how to understand a brief, compressed prophecy like that of Isaiah 61.

Or take the prophecy of the Second Advent as given in 2 Peter 3:3-13. If no other Bible passage was compared with this one, the conclusion might easily be reached that the Second Advent of Christ results immediately in the destruction of this earth by fire. Yet when we compare 2 Peter 3 with Revelation 20, we learn that a thousand years intervene between the Second Advent and the

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fiery destruction of this earth. Peter was giving only a brief summary of the outstanding events impending. He passed immediately from the great fact of the Second Advent over to the next great act in the drama of God's dealing with this earth, its destruction by fire. But with Peter's prophecy, as with that of Isaiah, there is no need for confusion if we follow the Bible plan of comparing scripture with scripture to fill in the details.

Now if Peter could place in one sentence (2 Peter 3:10) two great events separated by a thousand years, and Isaiah could couple in another sentence (Isa. 61:2) two mighty events separated by a period of time, why should it be thought strange if Paul followed this plan, and coupled together in one sentence (Phil. 1:23) the sad event of dying with the glorious event of being "with Christ" at the Second Advent? In the other passages we have quoted from Paul, the death of the Christian is directly connected with the resurrection at Christ's Advent, events which we know are separated by a long span of time. Therefore the mere fact of the coupling together of the event of dying with the event of being with the Lord, does not necessarily mean that these two events are immediately related. And when we follow the Bible rule of comparing scripture with scripture, we discover that the two events are widely separated.

Objection 84

During the time between His crucifixion and His resurrection Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison. (1 Peter 3:18-20.) This proves that there is an immaterial spirit, the real person, which departs from the body at death.

The passage reads thus: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

We wonder why Protestant believers in the immortality of the soul should quote this passage. If it gives them aid and comfort on this one doctrine, it thereby gives them great discomfort on two other doctrines, or rather heresies, according to orthodox Protestantism—purgatory and a second probation. If Christ went to preach to certain sinners after their death, the clear inference is that a second chance, or probation, was being extended to them. And if there was this second probation, then the place of torture in which they were confined was one from which there was escape, and that is perilously close to the idea of purgatory.

Furthermore, if Christ at His crucifixion really preached to lost spirits, why did He single out only the spirits of those who were "disobedient" "in the days of Noah"? Were none others entitled to a second chance? Away with an interpretation of Peter's words that would make him support such heresies!

Peter teaches the very opposite of the second-probation doctrine, declaring that the preaching took place "when once [or, at the time when] the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah." The phrase, "which sometime were disobedient," is simply an interjected explanatory statement. If the passage is read without this phrase, the time of the preaching can easily be seen: "He went

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and preached unto the spirits in prison . . . *when* once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

But how did Christ go to preach to these people? The text says, "By *which* also he went and preached." Now the "which" refers back to "the Spirit." Thus Peter is declaring that it was by the agency of "the Spirit" that Christ preached to these "spirits in prison" in the days of Noah.

Christ told His disciples that it was the Spirit that would "reprove the world of sin" (see John 16:7-9), and that they were therefore to wait until they were endued with the Spirit before they started out to preach. When the disciples brought conviction to sinners in the Christian Era, the real source of the preaching was the indwelling Spirit of God.

Now was there a preacher of God in antediluvian days through whom the Spirit could preach to men? Yes, Peter tells us that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness." (2 Peter 2:5.) In the inspired account of God's plan to destroy the earth by a flood, we read, "The Lord said, *My Spirit* shall not always strive [or, plead] with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Gen. 6:3. Then follows the account of God's calling Noah to make ready for the Flood. In other words, God's Spirit preached to these antediluvians through Noah, "a preacher of righteousness," waiting, in His long-suffering, a hundred and twenty years before finally destroying them.

But why should these people be said to be "in prison"? The Bible describes those who are in the darkness of sin as being "prisoners" and as being in a "prison house." And, specifically, the prophet Isaiah declares that the work of Christ, with "the Spirit of the Lord God" upon Him, was "the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (See Isa. 42:7; 61:1; cf. Luke 4:18-21.) The work of the Spirit in antediluvian times was evidently the same as in the time of Christ—the preaching to those who are prisoners of sin, offering them a way of escape.

Only one query remains. It will be asked why these people to whom Noah preached were called "spirits" if they were men alive

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on the earth. We will let an eminent commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, answer this. The fact that he is a believer in the immortal-soul doctrine makes his testimony on this passage particularly valuable. After declaring that the phrase, "he went and preached," should be understood to mean, "by the ministry of Noah," he remarks:

"The word *pneumasi*, *spirits*, is supposed to render this view of the subject improbable, because this must mean *disembodied* spirits; but this certainly does not follow; for *the spirits of just men made perfect*, Heb. 12:23, certainly means *righteous men*, and *men still in the church militant*; and the *Father of spirits*, Heb. 12:9, means *men still in the body*; and *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, Num. 16:22 and 27:16, means *men, not in a disembodied state*."—Comments on 1 Peter 3:19. (Italics his.)

Another learned commentator, Dr. J. Rawson Lumby, in *The Expositor's Bible*, remarks that during the earlier centuries, which was the period when the Catholic religion, with its belief in purgatory, was dominant, the passage was interpreted to mean that Christ went to preach to souls in hell.

"But at the time of the Reformation the chief authorities expounded them [these words of Peter's] of the preaching of Christ's Spirit through the ministry of the patriarch [Noah]."—Comments on 1 Peter 3:17-22.

Dr. John Pearson, in his *Exposition of the Creed*, a classic Church of England work, observes:

"It is certain then that Christ did preach unto those persons which in the days of Noah were disobedient, all that time 'the long-suffering of God waited,' and, consequently, so long as repentance was offered. And it is as certain that He never preached to them after they died."—Page 166.

Why should we be asked to explain this passage in harmony with our views when eminent theologians, who believe in the immortality of the soul, admit that the immortal-soul doctrine is not here taught?

Objection 85

Christ told the thief on the cross that he would be with Him that day in Paradise. (See Luke 23:43.)

The text reads thus: "Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Believers in the doctrine of immortal souls, or spirits, boldly bring forth 1 Peter 3:18-20 in an attempt to prove that when Christ died on the cross He went down to preach to certain lost souls in hell. But that claim is no sooner proved to be groundless than they confront us with this text in Luke 23:43, and inform us that when Christ died on the cross He went immediately to Paradise. We believe that Christ did not go to Paradise that crucifixion Friday, and for the following reasons:

If the reader will compare Revelation 2:7 with Revelation 22:1, 2, he will see that Paradise is where the "throne of God" is. Therefore, if Christ had gone to Paradise that Friday afternoon, He would have gone into the very presence of God. But Christ Himself, on the resurrection morning, declared to Mary, as she fell at His feet to worship Him, "Touch me not; for I am *not yet ascended* to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." John 20:17. How perfectly this statement of Christ's agrees with the words of the angel to the women at the tomb: "Come, see the place where the *Lord* lay." Matt. 28:6. He had lain in the tomb, that was why He said on the resurrection morning, "I am *not yet* ascended to my Father."

Are we therefore to be placed in the embarrassing position of attempting to decide whether to accept the statements made to the women by Christ and the angel on Sunday morning, or the statement made by Christ to the thief on Friday afternoon? No, Christ did not contradict Himself. Note the punctuation of Luke 23:43. Then remember that the punctuation in the Bible is quite modern.

The early manuscripts of the Bible not only did not use the comma, which is the particular punctuation mark in this sentence, but they actually ran the words right together in the line. Our translators used their best judgment in placing punctuation marks, but their work was certainly not inspired. Therefore we need not be held to these marks made by translators only about four hundred years ago, when we are endeavoring to determine the intent of the writers of nineteen hundred years ago.

The change of a comma may make a great difference in the meaning. If you write, "The teacher says my boy is no good," you mean one thing. But you mean something quite different if you add two commas, thus: "The teacher, says my boy, is no good." The words are the same, but the meaning is different. Now if the translators, who did such excellent work in general, had placed the comma in Luke 23:43 after "to day" instead of after "thee," we would not be confronted with an apparently hopeless contradiction. Christ's words could then properly be understood thus: Verily I say unto thee today (this day when it seems that I am deserted of God and man and am dying as a common criminal), Thou *shalt* be with Me in Paradise. Instead of being deprived of meaning, the words "to day" take on a real significance.

A similar sentence construction is found in the writings of the prophet Zechariah: "Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee." Zech. 9:12. The context shows that the rendering "double" was not to take place on that very "to day," but was a future event. It is evident that "to day" qualifies "declare." Even so in Luke 23:43, if "to day" be allowed to qualify "say," which is not only proper grammar, but a parallel to the language of Zechariah, there is no contradiction between the message to the thief and that to Mary. And, we should add, there is no conscious entity soaring away to Paradise that sad Friday afternoon.

Objection 86

How do you harmonize with your belief in the unconsciousness of man in death the Bible account of the witch of Endor, who brought forth Samuel to talk with King Saul? (See 1 Sam. 28:7-19.)

Saul commanded his servants, "Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her." Verse 7. They found such a woman at Endor. The woman inquires, "Whom shall I *bring up* unto thee? And he [Saul] said, *Bring me up* Samuel." Verse 11. A moment later the woman declared, "I saw gods *ascending out of the earth*. . . . An old man *cometh up*; and he is covered with a mantle." Verses 13, 14. "And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to *bring me up*? . . . Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines: and *to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me*." Verses 15-19.

This narrative says nothing about the prophet Samuel's coming down from heaven for this occasion. Saul uses the words, "*bring up*." The witch uses the same and similar expressions, "bring up," "ascending out of the earth," "cometh up." And to Samuel are attributed equivalent words, "bring me up." If anyone might claim this weird, tragic story, it would be we who believe that when the dead return to this earth they come "up" "out of the earth." But in seeking evidence regarding the state of man in death, we do not consider it safe to rely on the events and conversations of a devil-infested, God-condemned séance. However, inasmuch as the believers in the immortality of the soul appeal to this séance, we would inquire: How do you harmonize all these statements with *your* belief. You believe that the righteous dead are *up* in heaven, not *down* in "the earth." Can "ascending out of the earth" mean descending out of heaven?

Again, the narrative thus describes "Samuel": "An old man . . . covered with a mantle." Is this the way an immortal spirit

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would appear? Does it actually take on a body? If so, where does it obtain the body? If it be answered that there was a resurrection, we would reply that such a confession spoils the whole case, for we believe that the dead may be raised. But we do not believe that the devil has power to raise the dead, and certainly God was not at the bidding of this witch, who was under the divine death edict for practicing sorcery. (See Lev. 20:27; Deut. 18:10, 11.)

Now the record tells us later that Saul climaxed his sinful course by committing suicide. (See 1 Sam. 31:4.) But "Samuel," foretelling Saul's death, declares, "To morrow shalt thou and thy sons be *with me*." Pray tell, where did Samuel dwell, if the suicide Saul was to be with him? Really, we marvel that those who believe the doctrine of natural immortality ever bring up this Bible story, for by so doing they "bring up" Samuel from the "earth" when, according to their view, he is supposed to be in heaven; and they have the wicked Saul going to "be with" the holy Samuel, when this royal suicide is supposed, instead, to go to hell.

But why does the story speak of "Samuel" if he was not really there? The record does not say that *Saul* saw "Samuel," for when the witch cried out, he inquired, "What sawest *thou*?" And a moment later, "What form is he of?" If Samuel had really been there, why would not Saul have seen him? Were only the hag's eyes keen enough to discern "an old man . . . covered with a mantle"? We read that "Saul perceived that it was Samuel." The word "perceived" is from a different Hebrew word than "saw." The meaning is that Saul understood, or concluded, as a result of the description given by the witch, that Samuel was present.

The witch practiced a deception on Saul. She, deceived also by the devil, probably thought she saw Samuel. Saul, in turn, accepted her explanation. The Bible narrative then simply describes this spiritualistic séance in terms of the suppositions of the witch and of Saul. This is a literary rule known as the *language of appearance*. When the story says "Samuel," we may understand it to mean simply that devil-generated apparition that doubtless appeared, and which they *supposed* was Samuel.

Objection 87

Christ's story of the rich man and Lazarus proves the immortality of the soul. (See Luke 16:19-31.)

This story says nothing about immortal souls leaving the body at death. Instead, the rich man after he died had "eyes" and a "tongue," that is, very real bodily parts. He asked that Lazarus "dip the tip of his finger in water." If the narrative is to be taken literally, then the good and bad at death do not soar away as intangible spirits, but go to their rewards as real beings with bodily parts. Yet how could they go there bodily, seeing that their bodies had been buried in the grave?

Again, if this is a literal account, then heaven and hell are near enough for a conversation to be held between the inhabitants of the two places—a rather undesirable situation, to say the least. If the believers in natural immortality claim that this is a literal picture of the geography of heaven and hell, then they must surrender the text concerning the "souls under the altar" crying for vengeance against their persecutors. (See Rev. 6:9-11.) Both passages cannot be literal. If the righteous can actually see the wicked in torture, why should they need to cry to God for vengeance?

When the rich man pleaded that Lazarus be sent back to earth to warn others against hell, Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one *rose from the dead*." Luke 16:29, 31. Thus the narrative nowhere speaks of disembodied spirits, not even in the matter of returning to warn men. Instead, return is in terms of rising "from the dead."

To avoid believing that spirits have bodies and that heaven and hell are really near enough for conversations, does the objector now wish to view this story simply as a parable? Then we would

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remind him that theologians with one accord agree that doctrines ought not to be built upon parables or allegories. A parable, like other illustrations, is generally used to make vivid one particular point. To attempt to build doctrines on every part of the story would generally result in absurdity, if not utter contradiction. Certainly to try to find in the illustration a proof for a belief the very opposite of that held by the speaker or writer, would violate the most primary rule governing illustrations. We affirm that the objector, by using this parable to prove that men receive their rewards at death, would cause Christ to contradict Himself.

Elsewhere Christ states definitely the time when the righteous receive their reward and the wicked are cast into the consuming fire: "*When* the Son of man shall come in his glory, . . . and before him shall be gathered all nations: . . . *then* shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom. . . . *Then* shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Matt. 25:31-41.

There is no need that one return to give warning regarding the fate beyond the grave, because the living "have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." We, the living, are therefore surely justified in understanding the parable in harmony with what the prophets have said. Malachi, for example, states that "the day *cometh*" (it is a future event) when the wicked are to suffer the torments of consuming fire. (See Mal. 4:1-3.) The Old Testament writers are very emphatic in stating that the dead, righteous and wicked alike, lie silent and unconscious in the grave until the resurrection day. (See Job 14:12-15, 20, 21; 17:13; 19:25-27; Ps. 115:17; Eccl. 9:3-6, 10.)

Thus to declare the story a parable or an allegory, gives the objector no more support than if he declared it to be literal, unless he wishes to maintain the impossible claim that a particular point in a figurative story should be taken literally, even though there is thus created a direct contradiction of the literal statements of "Moses and the prophets" and Christ (in Matthew 25).

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We believe that the story is a parable, which was the usual method Christ employed in His teaching, even though here, as in various other instances, He does not specifically so state. We therefore seek to find just what lesson Christ was trying to teach, and do not attempt to make the parable prove anything more than this. Evidently Christ was wishing to rebuke the Pharisees, "who were covetous." Luke 16:14. They, indeed many of the Jews, thought that riches were a sign of God's favor, and poverty of His displeasure. Christ drove home the one primary lesson, that the reward awaiting the covetous rich, who have naught but crumbs for the poor, was the very opposite of what the Jews believed.

This is what the parable is intended to teach. It would be as consistent for us to contend that Christ taught here also that the righteous literally go to "Abraham's bosom," and that heaven and hell are within speaking distance, as that He taught that the reward comes immediately at death. Christ guarded against the drawing of unwarranted conclusions from this lesson He was teaching the Jews by placing it in the setting of a story. He doubly guarded it by declaring in closing that "Moses and the prophets" should be the guide to the living as regards their fate beyond death. Yes, He triply guarded it by definitely describing the return of anyone from the dead in terms of a resurrection.

By employing the language of allegory He could very properly have the unconscious dead carry on a conversation without necessitating the conclusion that the dead are conscious. Elsewhere in the Bible we find the vivid parable of the trees going "forth on a time to anoint a king over them," and of the conversation carried on between them. (See Judges 9:7-15; also 2 Kings 14:9.) Why not attempt to prove by this parable that trees talk and that they have kings? No, you say, that would be trying to make it prove more than was intended by the speaker. We agree. The same rule holds for the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

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Objection 88

The Bible speaks of “everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25:46) for the wicked, and of “everlasting fire” (verse 41) in which they will burn, and of their being “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). This proves the immortality of the soul.

The words translated “everlasting” and “for ever” do not necessarily mean *never ending*. These terms, when found in the New Testament, come from the Greek noun *aiōn*, or from the adjective *aiōnios* derived from this noun. When we examine various Scripture texts containing *aiōn*, we discover at once how impossible it would be to attempt to make this Greek root always mean an *endless* period. We read in Matthew 13:39 and elsewhere of “the *end* of the world [*aiōn*].” How could there be an “end” to something if it were endless? (Here is an illustration of where *aiōn* might be translated “age,” the “world” being viewed in its aspect of time. In Colossians 1:26 *aiōn* is thus translated.) We read of Christ that He has been exalted above “every name that is named, not only in *this* world [*aiōn*], but also in *that which is to come*.” Eph. 1:21. We read of “*this present* world [*aiōn*].” 2 Tim. 4:10. Thus again we see that an *aiōn* can have an *end*, for this present *aiōn* is to be followed by another and a different one. The Bible speaks of what “God ordained *before* the world [*aiōn*].” 1 Cor. 2:7.

Of Christ we read also, “Thou art a priest for ever [*aiōn*].” Heb. 5:6. Here “for ever,” or *aiōn*, clearly means this present age, for all theologians agree that Christ’s work as a priest comes to an *end* when sin has been blotted out. (The work of a priest is to deal with sin. See Heb. 2:17 and 5:1.)

Paul, writing to Philemon regarding the return of his servant Onesimus, said, “Thou shouldst receive [have, A.R.V.] him for ever [*aiōnios*], . . . both in the flesh, and in the Lord.” Philemon 15, 16. (Here we have the adjective that is derived from *aiōn*.)

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H. C. G. Moule, in that scholarly commentary, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, remarks on this text:

"The adjective tends to mark *duration as long as the nature of the subject allows*. And by usage it has a close connection with things spiritual. 'Forever' here thus imports both natural and spiritual permanence of restoration; '*forever*' *on earth*, and then hereafter; a final return to Philemon's home, with a prospect of heaven in Philemon's company."

We need not here raise the question as to whether Moule has altogether correctly measured Paul's words. We inquire simply: How could Philemon have Onesimus " 'for ever' *on earth*, and *then* hereafter," unless the earthly "for ever" had an end to it?

We read of "Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them . . . suffering the vengeance of eternal [*aiōnios*] fire." Jude 7. Are those cities, set ablaze long ago as a divine judgment, still burning? No; their ruins are quite submerged by the Dead Sea. The Bible itself specifically states that God turned "the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes." 2 Peter 2:6. Now the fate of these cities is declared to be a warning to all wicked men of the fate that impends for them. Therefore if the "*aiōnios* fire" of that long ago judgment turned into ashes those upon whom it preyed, and then died down of itself, we may properly conclude that the "*aiōnios* fire" of the last day will do likewise.

When we turn to the Old Testament we discover that "everlasting" and "for ever" sometimes signify a very limited time. We shall quote texts in which these two terms are translated from the Hebrew word *olam*, because *olam* is the equivalent of the Greek *aiōn*.

The Passover was to be kept "for ever [*olam*]." Ex. 12:24. But it ended with the cross. (See Heb. 9:24-26.) Aaron and his sons were to offer incense "for ever [*olam*]" (1 Chron. 23:13), and to have an "everlasting [*olam*] priesthood." Ex. 40:15. But this priesthood, with its offerings of incense, ended at the cross. (See Heb. 7:11-14.) A servant who desired to stay with his master, was to serve him "for ever [*olam*]." (See Ex. 21:1-6.) How could a servant serve a master to endless time? Will there be masters and servants in the

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world to come? Jonah, describing his watery experience, said, "The earth with her bars was about me for ever [*olam*]." Jonah 2:6. Yet this "for ever" was only "three days and three nights" long. Jonah 1:17. Rather a short "for ever." Because Gehazi practiced deceit, Elisha declared, "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee [Gehazi], and unto thy seed for ever [*olam*]." 2 Kings 5:27. Should we conclude, therefore, that Gehazi's family would never end, and that thus leprosy would be perpetuated for all time to come?

Thus by the acid test of actual usage we discover that in a number of cases *aiōn*, *aiōnios*, and *olam* have a very limited time value.*

What Bible usage thus reveals, Greek scholars confirm. For example, Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon, a standard work, gives the following as the principal meanings of *aiōn*:

"A space or period of time, especially a lifetime, life. . . . Also one's time of life, age: the age of man. . . . 2. A long space of time, eternity. . . . 3. Later, a space of time clearly defined and marked out, an era, age, . . . this present life, this world."

Alexander Cruden, in his concordance, which for many years was the one great concordance in the English language, remarks under the word "eternal":

"The words eternal, everlasting, forever, are *sometimes* taken for a long time, and are not always to be understood strictly."

The learned Archbishop Trench, in his authoritative work, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, remarks concerning the primary sense of *aiōn*:

"In its primary, it signifies time, short or long, in its unbroken

* The agreement in meaning between *olam* and *aiōn* is revealed in two ways:

1. The Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, always translates *olam* by *aiōn*. (See *A Greek and English Lexicon*, by Edward Robinson, under the word *aiōn*.)

2. The New Testament writers, in quoting an Old Testament passage, or using an Old Testament phrase, where *olam* is used, translate it by *aiōn*, or by the adjectival form, *aiōnios*. Note the following quotations:

Hebrews 1:8, "for ever and ever [*aiōn*]," quoting Psalms 45:6, "for ever and ever [*olam*]."

Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, "for ever [*aiōn*]," quoting Psalms 110:4, "for ever [*olam*]."

1 Peter 1:25, "for ever [*aiōn*]," quoting Isaiah 40:8, "for ever [*olam*]."

Hebrews 13:20, "everlasting [*aiōnios*]," as in Genesis 17:19, "everlasting [*olam*]."

2 Peter 1:11, "everlasting [*aiōnios*]," as in Psalms 145:13, "everlasting [*olam*]."

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duration; oftentimes in classical Greek the duration of human life.”
—Pages 208, 209.

During recent years many discoveries have been made of Greek writings of the first century A.D. These writings, called *papyri*, enable us to know just how the Greek was written and just what meanings belonged to words at the very time when the New Testament authors wrote. The Greek scholars J. H. Moulton and George Milligan, in their monumental work entitled *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, cite various instances in the *papyri* where *aiōn* is equivalent simply to the “period of life” of a person. Under “*aiōnios*” they make the following statement in summing up the evidence as to its usage by the first century Greek-speaking people of the Roman Empire:

“In general, the word depicts that of which the horizon is not in view, whether the horizon be at an infinite distance, . . . or whether it lies no farther than the *span of Cæsar’s life*.” (Italics ours.)

Now, having proved from the Bible and from Greek scholars that *aiōn* and *olam* are elastic terms, and oftentimes mean only a very limited period, we have removed the very basis on which rests the objection before us. But our case is even stronger when we note the rule that commentators give for measuring the time involved in *aiōn* or *olam* in any text.

Adam Clarke, in commenting on Gehazi’s leprosy (2 Kings 5:27), remarks:

“The *forever* implies as long as any of his [Gehazi’s] posterity should remain. This is the import of the word *le-olam*. It takes in the whole extent or duration of the thing to which it is applied. The *forever* of Gehazi was till his posterity became extinct.”

This agrees with the statement found in the quotation given earlier from Moule on Philemon 15:

“The adjective [*aiōnios*] tends to mark duration as long as the nature of the subject allows.”

Therefore, we should first decide whether a “subject” is so

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constituted that he can live endlessly before we decide that hell-fire will continue endlessly. Now note the statement made in the well-known commentary by J. P. Lange:

“The bodies and souls of the wicked will suffer *as long as they are capable of suffering*, which, *since they are immortal*, will . . . be forever.”—Comment on Jude 7. (Italics ours.)

The scholarly theologians do not attempt, as does the objector, to prove that souls are immortal because the judgment fires burn for an *aiōn*. On the contrary, knowing that the time value of *aiōn*, *aiōnios*, and *olam* must be determined by the “nature of the subject” involved, these scholars conclude that the fire will burn endlessly because they believe that the souls of the wicked “are immortal.” But the claim that the soul is immortal is the very point to be proved.

The Bible nowhere declares that the soul is immortal. (See answer to objection 80.) On the contrary, the Bible uses words that clearly convey the thought that in the case of the wicked the “nature of the subject” demands the conclusion that complete and speedy annihilation will take place. The wicked are described as “chaff,” “stubble,” “wax,” “fat,” et cetera. (See Matt. 3:12; Mal. 4:1; Ps. 68:2; 37:20.) We are told explicitly that the fire “shall burn them up” and “shall leave them neither root nor branch,” so that “they shall be ashes under the soles” of the feet of the righteous. Mal. 4:1-3.

Now, while we can thus correctly conclude that the “everlasting” torment of the wicked is but a limited period, we can at the same time logically conclude that the “everlasting” reward of the righteous is an unending one, for we are explicitly told that the righteous “put on immortality” at the Advent of Christ. (See 1 Cor. 15:51-55.) Thus the “nature of the subject” being immortal, the “everlasting” is correctly understood as meaning *endless*.

Objection 89

The Bible repeatedly speaks of hell and hell-fire, and of the wicked going down into hell when they die. This proves the conscious state of the dead.

The simple way to answer this objection is to examine the use of the word "hell" throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament, "hell" is always translated from the Hebrew word *sheol*, which means simply "the unseen state." (See Young's Analytical Concordance.) The idea of fire or punishment is not found in the word. We read, "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, . . . out of the belly of hell [*sheol*] cried I." Jonah 2:1, 2. It would be difficult to imagine anything akin to fire in connection with a cold sea monster. The marginal reading of this text gives "the grave" as the translation of hell, or *sheol*.

Sheol is very frequently translated "grave." Both good and bad go there. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave [*sheol*]?" Ps. 89:48. The godly man Job said, "If I wait, the grave [*sheol*] is mine house." Job 17:13. The psalmist wrote, "The wicked shall be turned into hell [*sheol*]." Ps. 9:17.

In the New Testament the word "hell" * is translated from the three following Greek words:

1. Once from the root *tartaros*, which means "a dark abyss." (See Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon.) This word is used in connection with the casting out of the evil angels from heaven down into "darkness." There is no idea of fire or torment in the word. The passage specifically declares that these angels are "*reserved* unto judgment." It is a *future* event. (See 2 Peter 2:4; Rev. 12:7-10.)

* Following are the New Testament references where the word "hell" is used:

1. From *tartaros*, 2 Peter 2:4.
2. From *hades*, Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14.
3. From *Gehenna*, Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

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2. Ten times from *hades*, which means "the nether world, the grave, death." (See Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon.) *Hades* describes the same place as *sheol*. This is evident from these two facts:

a. The Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, almost without exception, uses *hades* as the translation of *sheol*.

b. In quoting the Old Testament prophecy regarding Christ: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [*sheol*]," the New Testament writer gives, "hell [*hades*]." (See Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:27.)

When the word "hell," translated from *hades*, appears in the New Testament, the reader should not understand it to mean the exclusive abode of the wicked or a place of fire and brimstone, because:

a. The primary definition of *hades*, as already noted, does not demand such an understanding of the word.

b. We have shown that the Old Testament speaks of the righteous as well as the wicked going down to *sheol*. We have also shown that *hades* describes the same place or state. Did the ancient patriarchs go down into a place of flames?

c. The New Testament speaks of Christ's being in *hades*. (See Acts 2:27.) In order to be consistent, most of those who believe in the doctrine of disembodied souls and present-burning hell-fire, feel forced to interpret this text in Acts to mean that Christ's disembodied soul went *down* into hell-fire when He died on the cross, though at other times they endeavor to prove from Luke 23:43, 46 that Christ went *up* to God when He died. Both positions certainly cannot be right. The fact is that neither is correct.

Under objection 85, we showed that Luke 23:43 is wrongly interpreted. The interpretation of Acts 2:27 is equally false. As Christ died He cried out, "It is finished." His dying completed His suffering to save mankind. The erroneous ideas held by most theologians as to hell and *hades* have caused them their perplexity when reading this text in Acts. They cannot understand why Christ should descend into hell-fire.

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Though a believer in soul immortality, Albert Barnes, the eminent Presbyterian commentator, boldly disposes of the difficulty by discarding in this text the lurid value which theology has given to the word *hades*. He remarks: "The Greek word *hades* means literally a place devoid of light, a dark, obscure abode." In view of this he explains Acts 2:27 thus: "The meaning is simply, *Thou wilt not leave Me AMONG THE DEAD.*" (Emphasis his.) Incidentally he reminds his readers that the original word for soul may be understood to mean "the individual himself." That is why Barnes renders "My soul" by "Me."

Thus we may view Acts 2:27 as proving that *hades* means simply the abode of the dead, even though righteous, and thus in no way connected with fire or torment.

We conclude thus also from 1 Corinthians 15:55, where the word "grave" is a translation of *hades*, and describes that over which the righteous are finally victorious at the resurrection. Incidentally, 1 Corinthians 15:55 is a quotation from the Old Testament (Hosea 13:14), where we find the equivalent word *sheol* employed.

In one other text the translators of the King James Version indicated that "hell" may properly be translated by "grave." In Revelation 20:13, where "hell" is given in the text, the marginal reading is "the grave."

d. The Greek scholars who made the American Revised Version, sensing doubtless that our word "hell" has come to mean a place of fire and torment, did not use it to translate the Greek term *hades*. Instead, they simply transferred the Greek word *hades* right into the English. They use the word "hell" to translate a different Greek word, one which we will examine in a moment.

e. Moulton and Milligan, eminent Greek scholars, give this bit of information: "The word [*hades*] is common on tombstones in Asia Minor."—*The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, under "Hades."

We need hardly remark that the bereaved in Greek-speaking Asia Minor would surely not use the word *hades* on tombstones

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if it meant what English-speaking people mean by the word "hell." *

3. Twelve times from *Gehenna* (or, as it is sometimes transliterated, *Geenna*). This is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *Hinnom*, the name of a valley near Jerusalem "used as a place to cast carcasses of animals and malefactors, which were consumed by fire constantly kept up." (See Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon.) Thus *Gehenna* is the only one of those words translated "hell" in the Bible, that has any idea of fire or torment resident in it.

Now in connection with the twelve times *Gehenna* is used two facts stand out:

1. The "body" as well as the soul is said to be "cast into hell." Twice is the phrase used, "the whole body." (See Matt. 5:29, 30; 10:28.)

2. In not one of the twelve instances does the text tell *when* the wicked will be "cast into hell." The fiery judgment is simply described as a *future* event. This takes the whole point out of the objection before us.

However, these two facts contain evidence that this future event does not follow *immediately* after death. The "whole body" is not cast into the flames at death, and there is no suggestion in the texts that the "soul" is cast in at one time and the "body" at another. The immortal-soul doctrine, by defining "soul" as the real man and the body as but a fleshly prison house, really asks us to believe that the real man goes immediately at death to hell-fire, and then at some distant future date God raises the body, which has turned to dust, and consigns it to the fires. We avoid such an irrational and un-Scriptural conclusion by understanding the phrase "soul and body" to mean the whole person, viewed

* The only place in the Bible where fire or torment is coupled with *hades* is in Luke 16:23. This is in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which we have already examined. It is an accepted rule in theology that doctrines should not be based upon parables. It is even more questionable to attempt to discover the real meaning of a word by the setting in which it is placed in a parable or allegory.

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physically and mentally in his entirety, "the whole body." But when are persons cast bodily into the judgment fires? At the last great judgment day, when the wicked dead who have been raised, and who have been judged guilty, are "cast into the lake of fire." (See Rev. 20:11-15.)

Note that the wicked are here said to be "cast into" the fire, as though to describe the act of hurling an object into the flames. Note, further, the interesting fact, which is surely more than a mere coincidence in words, that the very same word "cast" (even in the original Greek) is repeatedly used in the various *Gehenna* texts. In no less than six of these texts we read, "*Cast into hell [Gehenna].*" (See also Matt. 25:31, 41, as to the time when the wicked are consigned to the judgment flames.)

From all the foregoing we reach the conclusion that the Bible does not support the idea that the wicked go at death into the flames of hell, but that the day when the impenitent objects of God's wrath are "cast into *Gehenna*" is still in the future.

Objection 90

The Bible says that hell-fire will not be quenched and that "their worm dieth not." (See Mark 9:43-48 and Isa. 66:24.) This proves the immortality of the soul.

Even if we should agree that *unquenched* means endlessly burning, we would not find it necessary to accept the doctrine that at death an immortal soul is freed from man and lives apart from the body. These texts do not speak of disembodied souls, or spirits, burning. The Bible paints a picture of literal, wicked men at the judgment day being "cast into the lake of fire." (See Revelation 20.) Christ speaks of the "whole body" being "cast into hell." (Matt. 5:29, 30.) If it be replied that the body would be destroyed by the flames, and therefore only the spirit would be left, we ask for the Bible proof that spirits, or souls, are impervious to fire. Christ declared we should "fear him which is able to destroy *both* soul and body in hell." Matt. 10:28. If "destroy" means *consume* as regards the "body," we demand very clear proof if we are expected to believe that "destroy" means to *leave unconsumed* as regards the "soul." A failure to produce such proof really takes the whole point out of the objection based on Mark 9 and Isaiah 66.

In Mark 9:43-48 Christ quite evidently refers to the same judgment fires as those described in Isaiah 66:24, where we read: "They [the righteous] shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses ["dead bodies," A.R.V.] of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." We are told in so many words that the agencies of "worm" and "fire" are working, *not* upon disembodied spirits, but upon bodies, *dead* bodies.

The word "hell" used in Mark 9:43-48 is from the Greek word *Gehenna*. This term, as we have learned (see objection 89), is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *Hinnom*, the name of a valley near Jerusalem, "used as a place to cast carcasses of animals

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and malefactors, which were consumed by fire constantly kept up.” (See Liddell and Scott’s Greek Lexicon.)

Christ here uses this Valley of Hinnom to teach His hearers the fate that awaits the wicked. Certainly the Jews who heard His words could not possibly have obtained any idea of wicked, disembodied souls endlessly suffering. They saw in Hinnom dead bodies being devoured by flames, or if the flames did not reach them, then by worms, those ever-present agents of destruction and disintegration. The fact that the fires of Gehenna were ever kept burning, were “not quenched,” was the surest proof that whatever was cast into them would be entirely consumed. To declare that if a fire keeps ever burning, then whatever is cast into it keeps ever living, is to go contrary both to the evidence of our senses and to the testimony of Scripture.

The question may now be asked: If whatever is cast into this fire is completely consumed, why will the fire always be kept burning? The answer is, It will not. A city-wide conflagration once enveloped Chicago. If we should describe that fire by saying that the flames could not be quenched, would you conclude that Chicago was still burning? No, you would simply understand that the fire raged until it had devoured everything within reach. Common knowledge makes unnecessary the additional statement that the fire itself then died down.

It is this natural sense of the word “quench” that we find used in the Bible. The Lord through Jeremiah declared to the ancient Jews, “If you will not hearken unto me, . . . then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof [of Jerusalem], and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” Jer. 17:27. (In the Septuagint the very same Greek root is here used for “quenched” as in Mark 9.) In 2 Chronicles 36:19-21 we read of the literal fulfillment of this prophecy when the Babylonians put the torch to the city. Is that fire still burning? Are those Jewish “palaces” ever consuming, but never quite consumed? How preposterous, you say. Then why should anyone wish to take Christ’s statement in Mark 9 and force from it the conclusion that the

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judgment fire will never end; and then build upon this the conclusion that the wicked will ever be consuming, but never quite consumed; and then finally rear upon this the conclusion that therefore the wicked have immortal souls?

Each and every one of these conclusions is unwarranted by logic and contrary to Scripture. The Bible nowhere says that souls are immortal, but declares that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Eze. 18:4. The Bible nowhere says that the wicked will ever be consuming; instead it declares that they will become "ashes." Mal. 4:3. The Bible does not say that the judgment fires will burn endlessly, for we read that these fires are due to God's setting ablaze this wicked earth, and that following this conflagration He creates "a new earth." (See 2 Peter 3:7-13 and Revelation 20 and 21.) There must therefore be an end to the fire, else this earth could not be re-created. In other words, the very promise of God to give us a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness is contingent upon there being an end to the judgment fires.

Objection 91

The doctrine that a Christian at death goes down into the grave, there to lie unconscious until the resurrection day, is a gloomy belief.

Even if we granted that the doctrine is gloomy, this would not be any proof that it is false. The question is not whether a doctrine appears gloomy or bright to our way of thinking, but whether it is taught in the Bible. Certainly the objector will agree that the doctrine of never-ending torment for the wicked is even worse than gloomy, yet it does not occur to him that the doctrine is therefore proved false. No, our feelings and fancies are hardly a safe guide in making any final decisions on questions of doctrine.

But we do not grant the charge made in this objection. It is more sentimental than sound. What does a sleeping man know of the passage of time, or of his condition in sleep? Likewise, what do those who "sleep in the dust of the earth" (Dan. 12:2) know of the passing of millenniums, or of the fact that the earth is their couch? Their return to consciousness at the voice of Christ, is the signal for them to "come forth." John 5:28, 29. And as the righteous, raised from the dead, look back over the centuries of their "sleep," the whole period will seem but a moment; and as they look forward to an endless eternity, their period of unconsciousness will seem even less than a moment.

We repeat, the charge is more sentimental than sound; and sentiment, when not re-enforced with Scripture, is not a valid objection. But we go further, and say that the charge is not even sentimentally sound. The minister who becomes eloquent in describing the happiness of Mr. Brown's departed son, finds his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth when he attempts to preach the funeral sermon for the late lamented son of Mr. Jones, who died in a drunken debauch. Mr. Brown is always cheered by the thought that his beloved son is enjoying the happiness of

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heaven, while Mr. Jones is ever haunted with the belief that his equally beloved, though wayward, son is suffering constantly the unspeakable tortures of hell. Yet the state of mind of both fathers is the result of the same doctrine! If the matter is to be decided on sentiment, then we insist that Mr. Jones as well as Mr. Brown be asked to answer the question: Is the doctrine of "soul sleeping" more gloomy than that of the immortality of the soul?

Or view the matter from another standpoint. Let us say that the godly Mr. Jones dies and that the wayward son lives. According to the immortality doctrine, a departed father gone to glory can see what his children are doing, can even hover near them as a spirit. Would heaven be any place of happiness for Mr. Jones as he gazed down upon the course his wastrel son was following? The father's state would be even more distressing in heaven than on earth, for while on earth he could possibly do something by counsel and example to reform his son, but in heaven he could only helplessly watch this child of his heart move steadily on to destruction. And then, when the son finally dies, the father's anguish is only intensified by the thought that this erring son has been transferred from earth to the endless tortures of hell-fire. All this logically follows from the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

In view of this, we marvel that an objection based on sentiment should ever be raised against the doctrine called "soul sleeping." We freely grant that any thought of death and the grave is tinged with sorrow and gloom, for death and the grave are enemies in God's universe. But is the sadness really lessened for the human family by belief in the immortal-soul doctrine? No, the very opposite. We believe that both the Bible and sentiment agree in favor of the doctrine of unconsciousness in the grave until the resurrection day.

Objection 92

The Adventist doctrine that when a man dies he lies silent and unconscious in the grave until the resurrection day is un-Scriptural, illogical, and gross, as compared with the doctrine held by Christians in general that the real man is an immortal soul that departs from the body at death.

Much of this objection, at least as it touches the question of the Scriptural character of the Adventist doctrine, has already been covered in the preceding pages. But the form in which the objection is framed invites a comparison of the two doctrines regarding the nature of man. Note these distinguishing marks of the immortal-soul doctrine:

1. This doctrine demands that we believe there dwells within us an entity possessed of personality, yet without weight or discernible dimensions. Indeed, this tenet logically requires us to believe that this entity is the real man, for the body is viewed as but a shell, a temporary prison. This calls for a stretch of faith beyond the reach of many otherwise devout men, especially among those who make up the ranks of the learned and scientific. In the attempt to prove the existence of this alleged entity, the Christian theologian and philosopher have had to rely on certain vague scriptures and metaphysical deductions. To many minds such "proof" has failed to offset the testimony of the senses and the fundamental laws of science, for the senses can discern no such entity, and the most definitely established of nature's laws find no place for a "something" without weight or dimensions.

2. This belief that man, the real man, is but an airy soul, without weight, and so minute that ten thousand could dance on the point of a cambric needle, as the older theologians declared, takes the reality out of the future life. Tangibility cannot be given to the term *heaven*, for consistency demands that vaporous, invisible beings dwell in a place of the same nature. This doctrine

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makes heaven appear as an airy abode of attenuated spirits, who apparently, because it would be illogical to think of their doing anything more substantial, are pictured as endlessly flitting about to the accompaniment of harps. Such a conception of heaven has gone far to quench the longing of many to reach that blessed abode, for the human mind is so constituted that it must think in terms of something more substantial than this vaporous picture of heaven presents.

3. This doctrine makes an ever-burning hell a logical necessity; for if man is inherently immortal, then the wicked as well as the righteous will live through the ceaseless ages of eternity. Blood-curdling are the sermons this belief has produced. Granted that the average minister today does not preach on the topic as was done in former times. His silence is only a confession of the hideousness of the doctrine that must be true if man is an immortal soul. Indeed, there has been a definite trend away from belief in any kind of retribution, because the average mind is unable to harmonize an ever-burning hell with the character of God. Thus there has come about a great loss in moral values, for a belief in punishment is as vital to a balanced view of religion as a belief in reward.

No other doctrine has ever brought such reproach upon the name of God and of Christianity. It is said that Robert Ingersoll after listening, when a boy, to an orthodox sermon on the kind of judgment God would mete out to sinners, exclaimed, "If that is God, I hate Him." The united arguments of all the Christian apologists who have attempted to harmonize this dogma with the universal and deep-seated belief in a loving God, fall far short of their goal. This is the dark spot in apologetics.

But there is still another problem that this eternal-hell doctrine presents. The Christian view of the universe requires that the completion of God's plan for the salvation of man and the conquest of evil should bring about the restoration of that state of universal holiness and happiness that existed at first. But if there be a hell, then we have, not the annihilation, but merely the

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segregation of evil. Now the policy of segregation is considered by Christians as a poor makeshift for an earthly government to employ in dealing with crime and criminals. Is it possible that such a procedure is ideal when employed by the government of heaven?

4. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul leaves no rational place for the resurrection of the body or for an executive judgment at the close of earthly history. While these two doctrines—the resurrection and the future judgment—are in the creeds of almost all denominations, they are inconsistent with the teaching that the body is merely a prison house from which the soul escapes at death, going directly to its reward. Why should the soul again be thrust into a “prison house” and why should there be held a judgment, seeing each soul receives judgment at death by being consigned either to heaven or to hell?

These questions suggest their own answer, and explain, at least in part, the almost complete absence of preaching on the subject of the resurrection.

5. This immortal-soul doctrine makes spiritism appear highly reasonable. The popular view, which pictures our departed loved ones as near us and deeply interested in our affairs, is but a step removed from spiritism, which simply adds the feature of communication. Thus instead of a wall's being reared against this cult, which virtually all ministers regard as evil, there is a door opened to it.

Beyond all controversy, there is something vitally the matter with orthodox belief regarding man and the future life. If the inspired maxim, “By their fruits ye shall know them,” is still a safe rule, then this teaching stands condemned, for its fruits are theological confusion, spiritism, and infidelity.

The Bible doctrine that Seventh-day Adventists preach concerning man's nature dissolves the dilemmas and doctrinal difficulties that confront Christians who hold the immortal-soul theory, and in the very process of dissolving these difficulties this true Bible doctrine brings a new sense of reality and certainty to various important aspects of the Christian religion.

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We do not have to teach the incredible doctrine that there exists within a man a "something" which is the real man, but which is not discernible to any of the senses, and is not answerable to any of the proved laws of science. We view the word *man* as signifying something very real and substantial. We do not wander off into the mazes of metaphysical discussion in an attempt to understand or explain how God could breathe into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man become a living soul; we simply affirm, on the strength of the Bible record, that body, soul, and spirit are all required to give existence and meaning to what the Bible refers to when it speaks of man in the most basic sense of that word.

Nor are we embarrassed by the charge that there is something gross in this conception of man. We believe that this charge reveals that Christendom is still infected in some degree with the Gnostic heresy that matter is essentially evil. It has been said that in Catholicism, Gnosticism gained half a victory. The monkish fervor that took hold of many in the early centuries of the church, and which reached a dramatic height in the body-mortifying asceticism of the pillar saints, was a natural fruitage of the pernicious idea that matter is essentially evil, and that the more the body is wasted away, the more the soul can flourish.

Monkish asceticism could never find logical rootage among Seventh-day Adventists. On the contrary, our view of man calls for us to give great care to these bodies of ours. We see a fullness of meaning in Paul's injunction: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31. And we, of all people, are best able to appreciate the apostle's declaration that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that if we defile these bodies, God will destroy us. Our doctrine of healthful living rests solidly and logically on the foundation of our doctrine regarding the nature of man.

Believing as we do regarding man, we do not have to describe the future state of the blessed as composed of a mixture of misty vapors and harp music. Our view of man calls for a real place of

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abode. That harmonizes with our understanding of the first creation of man as a perfect being which, by analogy, calls for equally literal as well as equally perfect beings to dwell on the earth made new.

Our view of the nature of man does not interfere in any way with the doctrine of final hell-fire. Indeed, if the real man is a literal being, then the place of punishment must surely be a literal place, and the punishment must be something very literal. But what our view of man as mortal does save us from is the teaching that hell's fires will never end. A literal fire burns to ashes literal beings, which fact harmonizes with the prophecy of Malachi 4:1-3. There is no immortal entity to resist eternally the flames. Our belief concerning the creation of this earth anew as the abode for literal, perfect beings requires of itself that there shall be an end to the fires of hell.

Obviously our doctrine of man's nature makes necessary a belief in the bodily resurrection from the grave. We can take most literally the declarations of Paul concerning the "redemption of our body," and his further statement that "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." We can also understand what the apostle means when, in concluding his account of the famous worthies, in the epistle to the Hebrews, he declares, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Heb. 11:39, 40.

Finally, we have an ironclad argument against spiritism, with its materializations; Catholicism, with its supplications to long-dead saints and its prayers for the dead; and any ism that is built on the doctrine of the inherent immortality of the soul. In fact, those who accept the Bible view that man lies silent in the grave until the resurrection are the only ones who can consistently oppose spiritism or return an answer to the perplexing inquiry of spiritists: "Why do Christian ministers oppose the investigations of spiritism,

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when our success would simply serve to establish one of the great doctrines of the Christian church—immortality?” With psychic activities increasing every year, this question will become an increasingly distressing one to those who hold to the so-called orthodox view of the soul.

NOTE

The Hebrew and Greek Words Translated “Soul” and “Spirit” and “Hell”*

An adequate and harmonious explanation of certain perplexing texts that deal with the nature of man requires a knowledge of the meaning of certain key words in the original languages. Hence this extended note.

Soul in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the word *soul* is used 473 times. There are three words in the Hebrew from which *soul* is translated:

1 time from *nedibah*.

1 time from *neshamah*.

471 times from *nephesh*.

These three terms are translated by the following words:

Nedibah

1 time, *soul*. Job 30:15. (The only use of *nedibah* in the Bible.)

Neshamah

17 times, *breath* (breathe, breatheth, breathed). For example:

Gen. 2:7; 7:22; Deut. 20:16; Joshua 10:40; 11:11.

3 times, *blast*. 2 Sam. 22:16; Job 4:9; Ps. 18:15.

2 times, *spirit*. Job 26:4; Prov. 20:27.

1 time, *souls*. Isa. 57:16.

1 time, *inspiration*. Job 32:8.

Nephesh

471 times, *soul*. (Every text in Old Testament where *soul* is used, except Job 30:15 and Isaiah 57:16.)

* In one or two instances the figures given to indicate the specific number of times that a Hebrew or Greek term is translated by a certain English word, will vary, depending on which concordance is used as authority. The figures in this chapter have been obtained from a comparative study of The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance, The Englishman's Greek Concordance, Young's Analytical Concordance, and Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. However, the fact of interest is not so much the particular number of times that a certain term is translated by a particular English word, as the great *variety* of words by which the Hebrew or Greek term is rendered.

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- 118 times, *life* (*life's, lives*). For example: Gen. 1:20, 30; 9:4; 1 Kings 19:14; Job 6:11; Ps. 38:12.
- 29 times, *person*. For example: Num. 31:19; 35:11, 15, 30; Deut. 27:25; Joshua 20:3, 9; 1 Sam. 22:22.
- 15 times, *mind*. For example: Deut. 18:6; Jer. 15:1.
- 15 times, *heart*. For example: Ex. 23:9; Prov. 23:7.
- 9 times, *creature*. Gen. 1:21, 24; 2:19; 9:10, 12, 15, 16; Lev. 11:46.
- 7 times, *body* (or, *dead body*). Lev. 21:11; Num. 6:6; 9:6, 7, 10; 19:13; Haggai 2:13.
- 5 times, *dead*. Lev. 19:28; 21:1; 22:4; Num. 5:2; 6:11.
- 4 times, *man* (*men*). Ex. 12:16; 2 Kings 12:4; 1 Chron. 5:21; Isa. 49:7.
- 3 times, *me*. Num. 23:10; Judges 16:30; 1 Kings 20:32.
- 3 times, *beast*. Lev. 24:18.
- 2 times, *ghost*. Job 11:20; Jer. 15:9.
- 1 time, *fish*. Isa. 19:10.

Nephesh is also translated one or more times as *we, he, thee, they, her, herself, him* (and other forms of the personal pronoun), and as *will, appetite, lust, thing, breath, etc.*

Two striking facts stand out in this study of the word *nephesh*:

1. The wide variety of uses to which the word is put.
2. The word is used to describe something that can be killed, and also to designate dead persons.

Note also the repeated statements as to a "living creature [*nephesh*]." The adjective *living*, would be superfluous if *nephesh* itself meant an immortal, never-dying entity.

Soul in the New Testament

In the New Testament the word *soul* is used 58 times and is uniformly the translation of the Greek word *psuchē*. *Psuchē* is rendered by the following words in our English Bible:

- 58 times, *soul*.
- 40 times, *life*. For example: Mark 3:4; 10:45; Luke 6:9; 9:56; John 13:37; Rom. 11:3; Rev. 8:9; 12:11.
- 3 times, *mind*. Acts 14:2; Phil. 1:27; Heb. 12:3.
- 1 time, *heart*. Eph. 6:6.
- 1 time, *heartily* (literally, *from the soul*). Col. 3:23.

Psuchē is also used, once in John 10:24 and in 2 Corinthians 12:15, in idiomatic phrases that cannot be literally translated.

Note that the words *kill* and *destroy* are used several times in regard to *psuchē*.

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Spirit in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the word *spirit* is used 234 times. It is a translation of the following Hebrew words:

2 times from *neshamah*.

232 times from *ruach*.

These two terms are translated by the following words in our English Bible:

Neshamah

(See analysis earlier in note.)

Ruach

232 times, *spirit*. (With the exception of Job 26:4 and Prov. 20:27, which are from *neshamah*, *spirit* in the Old Testament is always from *ruach*.)

97 times, *wind*. (*Wind* in the Old Testament is always a translation of *ruach*.)

28 times, *breath*. For example: Gen. 6:17; 7:15, 22; Job 12:10; Ps. 104:29; 146:4; Eccl. 3:19.

8 times, *mind*. Gen. 26:35; Prov. 29:11; Eze. 11:5; 20:32; Dan. 5:20; Hab. 1:11.

4 times, *blast*. Ex. 15:8; 2 Kings 19:7; Isa. 25:4; 37:7.

Ruach is also translated one or more times by the following words: *anger*, *air*, *tempest*, *vain*.

Spirit in the New Testament

In the New Testament the word *spirit* is used 290 times. It is a translation of the following Greek words:

2 times from *phantasma*.

288 times from *pneuma*.

These two Greek words are translated by the following words in our English Bible:

Phantasma

2 times, *spirit*. Matt. 14:26; Mark 6:49. (These are the only uses of the word *phantasma* in the Bible.)

Pneuma

288 times, *spirit*. (With the exception of Matt. 14:26 and Mark 6:49, *spirit* in the New Testament is always a translation of *pneuma*.)

92 times, *ghost*. Matt. 27:50; John 19:30. (Also every instance where the word is used in the phrase "Holy Ghost.")

1 time, *life*. Rev. 13:15.

1 time, *wind*. John 3:18.

1 time, *spiritual*. 1 Cor. 14:12.

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Hell in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the word *hell* is used 31 times, and is uniformly the translation of the Hebrew word *sheol*. *Sheol* is rendered by the following words in our English Bible:

31 times, *hell*.

31 times, *grave*. For example: Gen. 37:35; 1 Sam. 2:6; Job 7:9; Ps. 30:3; Eccl. 9:10; Isa. 38:18; Eze. 31:15; Hosea 13:14.

3 times, *pit*. Num. 16:30, 33; Job 17:16.

Hell in the New Testament

In the New Testament the word *hell* is used 23 times. It is a translation of the following Greek words:

10 times from *hades*.

12 times from *gehenna*.

1 time from *tartaroō*.

These three Greek words are translated by the following words in our English Bible:

Hades

10 times, *hell*. Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14.

1 time, *grave*. 1 Cor. 15:55.

Gehenna

9 times, *hell*, as a noun. Matt. 5:29, 30; 10:28; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

3 times, *hell*, as an adjective. Matt. 5:22; 18:9; Mark 9:47.

Tartaroō

1 time, *hell*, 2 Peter 2:4. (The only use of *tartaroō* in the Bible.)

Definitions of Hebrew Terms

The following definitions are from Gesenius. The edition of the Lexicon here used is one published in 1875 by John Wiley & Son, New York, the English translation being by Samuel P. Tregelles:

“NEDIBAH: *Nobility, a noble and happy condition.*”

“NESHAMAH: (1) *Breath, spirit.* (a) The Spirit of God imparting life and wisdom. (b) The spirit of man, *soul*. A *living creature*. . . .

“ (2) *The panting* of those who are angry, used of the anger of God.”

“NEPHESH: (1) *Breath*. . . .

“ (2) The *soul, anima, puschē*, by which the body lives, the token of which life is drawing breath, . . . hence *life*, vital principle. Gen. 35:18; 1 Kings 17:21; Ex. 21:23. *The soul* is also said both to live (Gen. 12:13; Ps. 119:175); and to die (Judges 16:30); to be killed (Num.

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31:19). . . . It is often used in phrases which relate either to the loss or to the preservation of life. . . .

“(3) *The mind*, as the seat of the sense, affections, and various emotions. . . .

“(4) Concretely, *animal*, that in which there is a soul or mind. . . .

“(5) It is sometimes *I, myself, thou, thyself*.”

“RUACH: (1) *Spirit, breath*. (a) Breath of the mouth. . . . Hence used of anything quickly perishing. . . . Often used of the *vital spirit*. . . . (b) *Breath* of the nostrils, snuffing, snorting. . . . Hence *anger*. . . . (c) *Breath of air, air in motion*, i.e., *breeze*. . . .

“(2) *Psuchē anima, breath, life, the vital principle*, which shows itself in the breathing of the mouth and nostrils (see No. 1, a, b), whether of men or of beasts, Eccl. 3:21; 8:8; 12:7. . . .

“(3) *The rational mind or spirit*. (a) As the seat of the senses, affections, and emotions of various kinds. . . . (b) As to the mode of *thinking and acting*. . . . (c) *Of will and counsel*. . . . More rarely (d) it is applied to the *intellect*. . . .

“(4) *The Spirit of God*.”

“SHEOL: A subterranean place, full of thick darkness (Job 10:21, 22), in which the shades of the dead are gathered together; . . . hell, purgatory, *limbus Patrum*. . . . *A hollow and subterranean place*.”

Definitions of Greek Terms

The following definitions are from Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon:

“PSUCHE: I. *Breath*, Latin, *anima*, especially as the sign of life, *life, spirit*. . . . II. *The soul or immortal part of man, as opposed to his body or perishable part*, in Homer only in the significance of a *departed soul, spirit, ghost*: he represents it as bodiless and not to be seized by mortal hands. . . . III. As the organ of *nous*, i.e., of thought and judgment, the *soul, mind, reason, understanding*. . . . IV. The *anima mundi*, or *living spirit*, which was supposed in the ancient philosophy to permeate all lands and the whole extent of the sea and high heaven.”

“PHANTASMA: *An appearance, image, phantom, specter*. . . . *A vision, dream*. 2. Especially an image presented to the mind by an object. . . . 3. *A mere image, unreality*.”

“PNEUMA: *Wind, air*. . . . 2. Especially like Latin *anima*, the *air we breathe, breath*, . . . also *breathing, respiration*. . . . 3. *Life*, . . . also *the spirit, a living being*. . . . 4. *A spirit, spiritual being*, [in] New Testament. 5. Metaphorically, *spirit*, i.e., *feeling*.”

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“HADES: The *nether* world. . . . Place of departed spirits. . . . The grave, death.”

“GEHENNA: The *valley of Hinnom*, which represented the place of future punishment.”

“TARTAROO: [A form of the noun Tartaros] The *nether* world generally.”

Comments on Definitions

It should be remembered that the foregoing definitions are largely illustrations of how the terms were used by classic Greek writers. Hence pagan conceptions are inevitably interwoven. In these definitions of both Hebrew and Greek words agree the other lexicographers.

There is nothing in the *primary* definitions of the terms for *soul* and *spirit* that demands or even warrants the thought of an immortal, undying entity, independent of the body. True, the second definition given for *psuchē* is the “immortal part of man,” but the lexicographers are simply noting down one of the uses of *psuchē* by the classical Greeks, such as Homer, who were *pagans*. To attempt to settle a question of Christian theology by appealing to a definition based on the usage of a word by pagan writers would indeed be a strange procedure. By such a method we could find support for the pagan doctrine of pantheism in the fourth definition of *psuchē*, which, again, is simply an illustration of the usage of the word by *pagan* writers.

We grant that the pagans believed in disembodied souls, or spirits, and therefore, at times, used *psuchē* and other terms to express that belief. The question is simply this: Does the primary meaning of *psuchē*, or any other term translated “soul” or “spirit,” necessitate belief in the immortal-entity idea? The answer is no. Then follows the companion question: Does the use of these terms by *Bible* writers—not pagan writers—warrant such belief? The answer is no.

There is nothing in the definition or usage of *sheol* that even implies a place of burning or torment. The same may be said of the terms *hades* and *tartaroō*. The pagans knew that the dead went somewhere, they knew not where, and the terms they frequently used to describe that unknown abode were *hades* and *tartaroō*. The term *gehenna* is really a proper noun, a transliteration of a Hebrew name for the burning place outside Jerusalem. We have here the literary figure of simile. The final judgment, or destruction, of the wicked is likened to the fires burning in the valley of Hinnom. The fires of Hinnom were not quenched; that was why they were certain to consume all that was cast into them.

How Long Is Everlasting?

[The following, by W. E. Howell, appeared in the *Review and Herald* of June 22, 1939.]

THE three words *forever*, *everlasting*, and *eternal* are closely related in their Greek originals. Their interrelation as English words is easy to see: *for-ever*, *ever-lasting*, *ever-ternal* (contracted to *e-ternal*). They can be best studied in the order given. Then we may take them in typical passages where they occur and note the application of their individual meaning.

"Forever"

This is really two words: *for* and *ever*. It is so printed in the Bible, and usually so in England even today. The word *ever* comes to us from the Anglo-Saxon *aifre*, Latin *aevum*, Greek *ai (w)on*. The last is itself from two simpler elements: *aei*, "always," "ever," and *on*, "being." From the combination of these two into *aion*, comes our direct derivative *aeon*, now usually written *eon*. Since this word is the basis of our whole study, it will pay us to notice it a bit further.

Historically *aion* is many eons old. Homer (about 800 B.C.), and in fact all the poets through the classical period to the time of Alexander, used this word in the sense of lifetime or life, which during the same period easily passed into the more general prose sense of an age or generation, the next generation being spoken of as "the coming *aion*." From this it passed into long space of time, era, epoch, but no more definitely marked off than our corresponding terms in English. In the Byzantine period it retains the general meaning of age. Barnabas uses "the holy *aion*" to refer to the world to come. The LXX uses "from *aion*" in speaking of the giants in Genesis 6:4 as being "of old," or ancient, and in Isaiah 64:4, "from the *aion*" is used in the sense of from the beginning of the world. Modern Greek uses *aion* for century, as the "20th *aion*"; and for age, as the "golden *aion*"; also in the dialect, like our colloquial, "I have not seen him for an *aion*."

It is easy to see that the underlying idea in this word is *continuity* (without a break), whether for a definite or an indefinite period, long

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or short. The New Testament usage agrees with these variations of the basic idea, as witness the following ten examples:

1. *Before the aions*, before the ages covered by this world's history (1 Cor. 2:7).
2. *From the aion* or *aions*, from the beginning of the world's history (Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; 15:18; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9).
3. *In the now aion*, the present world or period of the world's history (1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10).
4. *This aion*, this world, or period of the world (Rom. 12:2; Luke 16:6; 20:34).
5. *The god of this aion*, the devil now ruling men's lives during the age of sin (2 Cor. 4:4).
6. *The ends of the aions*, last part of the world's periods or ages (1 Cor. 10:11).
7. *The end of the aion*, end of the world (Matt. 13:39; 24:3).
8. *The coming aion*, the future world (Heb. 6:5).
9. *That aion*, the world to come (Luke 20:35).
10. *In the aions to come*, the successive periods of the future existence (Eph. 2:7).

Now coming back to our word *forever*, or rather two words *for* and *ever*, practically a preposition and a noun, we find their exact counterpart in the Greek, as for example:

"Let not fruit grow on thee henceforward *into the aion*" (Matt. 21:19); "he shall live *into the aion*" (John 6:51; Heb. 6:20); "glory *into the aions*" (Rom. 11:36); "yesterday, to-day, and *into the aions*" (Heb. 13:8).

These simpler forms are also compounded into more emphatic expressions, as:

"Into all the generations *of the aion of the aions*," the age embracing shorter ages (Eph. 3:21); "ascendeth up *into aions of aions*," longer ages embracing shorter ages (Rev. 14:11); "glory *into the aions of the aions*," seemingly more inclusive than the preceding (Gal. 1:5); "I am alive *into the aions of the aions*" (Rev. 1:18); "smoke rose up *into the aion of the aions*" (Rev. 19:3); "day and night *into the aion of the aions*" (Rev. 20:10); "shall reign *into the aions of the aions*" (Rev. 11:15; 22:5).

Now out of 123 times *aion* is used in the New Testament, it is used 55 times as the base of some phrase rendered *forever* or *forever and ever*. The conclusion on the use and meaning of *forever* may be stated as follows:

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It seems reasonable to conclude from this study that *aion*, like our *age* (which the lexicographer traces back to *aion*), denotes a period or state of undefined length, and that to determine its measure, in any given instance, even relatively, we must consider the context and other passages where it is found.

To illustrate: when it is said in Revelation 11:15 that Christ shall reign unto the *aions of the aions*, no one doubts that this means ages without end.

When it is said of the punishment of the wicked in Revelation 14:11, that "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *into aions of aions*," we must conclude one of two things: (1) that smoke is here used as a symbol of the effect, or result, of their torment; or (2) that *aions of aions* denotes a limited, not an unlimited, period of time; for of the final destruction of the wicked it is said in Revelation 20:9 that "fire came down from God out of heaven and *devoured* them" (literally, *completely ate them up*, as the fowls did the seed by the wayside, the same word being used in Matthew 13:4).

When it says in Revelation 20:10 that the devil and the beast and the false prophet "shall be tormented day and night *into the aions of the aions*," we must not conclude that this means time without end; for they were leaders of the wicked "on the breadth of the earth," and the next scene after they were cast into the lake of fire (on the breadth of the earth) was a "new heaven and a *new earth*: for the first heaven and the first earth were *passed away*." Rev. 21:1. The "first heaven" must refer to the atmospheric heaven (for the dwelling place of God does not pass away), and if the old atmosphere passed away, it certainly took the smoke with it; and if the old earth passed away, there must have passed with it both the wicked and the devil and the beast and the false prophet, who were tormented and *devoured* "on the breadth of the earth."

This conclusion is consistent with the testimony of Malachi concerning "all that do wickedly," that "the day that cometh shall *burn them up*" and "shall leave them *neither root nor branch*," and the wicked "shall be *ashes* under the soles of your feet."

"Everlasting"

In twenty-three out of the twenty-five times that the Greek word translated "everlasting" is found in the New Testament, it is an adjective formed on the stem of *aion*, namely *aionios*. Manifestly when this adjective form is used, we leave off the *for* and add to *ever* whatever fits best the idea of the noun which *aionios* modifies: if *life*, we say

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ever-continuing, ever-lasting; if a flower, we say *ever-blooming*; if a tree, we say *ever-green*; if a certain type of person having only a "form of godliness," we say *ever-learning* and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. In none of these instances do we understand *ever* to mean continuing without end, unless it be in the case of *life*.

Hence in the use of *ever* to render *aionios*, it is clear that it must be subject to the same interpretation as in rendering *aion* itself.

Of the twenty-five times that *aionios* is rendered *everlasting*, it is used fourteen times with *life*, every one of which fourteen no one will question means life without end. Of the remaining eleven times, two are used with *fire*, which we must understand to mean continuing unquenchable till that on which the fire feeds is consumed (see under "Forever," above). In the remaining nine times, we find *aionios* used as follows: "once with *punishment*, permanent in effect (see same comment); once with *habitations*, doubtless new earth, and without end; once with *God*, unquestionably without ceasing; once with *destruction*, in effect like punishment; once with *consolation*, unending for the saved; once with *power*, ascribed to God, hence without limit; once with *covenant*, unending in result accomplished; once with *kingdom*, ascribed to Christ, hence unceasing; once with *gospel*, which is the *power of God* (Rom. 1:16), hence limitless in duration."

In one other place (Jude 6) "everlasting" is from another word, *aidios*, always existing, which comes from the same base as *aionios*; namely, *aei*, always.

"Eternal"

In every instance of its use in the New Testament, this word comes from one of the two above rendered *everlasting*, with one exception, in which it comes directly from *aion* itself. From one of the two, *aidios*, it comes but once. From the other, *aionios*, it comes forty-two times. It is applied to *life* thirty times, without question life without end; once to *damnation*, unending in result; three times to *glory* without end; once to *unseen things*, imperishable; once to *building of God*, standing without destruction; once to *salvation*, without end; once to judgment, never ending in result; once each to *redemption*, *Spirit*, and *inheritance*, all without limit; once to *fire*, same limit as *everlasting* (which see).

In derivation the English word *eternal* goes back through the Latin to the Greek *aion*. In use, it is a synonym of *everlasting* when applied to the future, but distinguished from it in that it may refer backward to time without a beginning, as well as without end.

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Summary

From the study of *forever*, *everlasting*, and *eternal*, it is easy to see that they are subject to the same variation in interpretation, being mostly renderings of the adjective *aionios* or of the noun *aion*, which latter, in phrase, is rendered *forever*. In fact, *aionios* itself is once rendered *forever* (Philemon 15), suggesting the close relation of the three words under study here.

Thus wonderfully does the word harmonize with itself. Any unprejudiced mind can answer the question, "How long is everlasting?"

Life, Soul, and Spirit

[The following, by W. E. Howell, appeared in the *Review and Herald* of Feb. 27, 1941.]

This article deals with a great trinity of gospel terms, "life," "soul," and "spirit." It is important to discriminate between these terms, so that we may know what it is that abides in the body during life, what it is that leaves the body at death, and what is the state of the dead.

It is a remarkable fact that in the King James Version the word "soul" always represents the same word in the original Greek, *psuchē*; but on the other hand, *psuchē* is also translated "life" forty-one different times, as compared with "soul" sixty times. It is an equally remarkable fact that "life" represents the Greek word *zōē* a total of 125 times, and *psuchē* 41 times, as stated above. This being the case, it becomes necessary to distinguish between the meaning of *zōē* and *psuchē* in the original, and of "life" and "soul" in the translation.

Each of the Greek words comes from a different verbal root meaning "breathe," but usage has established a difference in import. Thus *zōē* names the act of breathing as an *evidence* of life, while *psuchē* names it as an *act* of life, and *pneuma* (spirit) denotes the breathing as a *means* of life. From this we may deduce that *zōē* is life as an essence or principle, that *psuchē* represents life as it is possessed and lived out from day to day, and that *pneuma* denotes the medium through which life does its work, and the quality of that work.

In actual usage in the New Testament, we find:

1. That *zōē* is invariably used to denote the inherent life of God, the inherent life of Christ, imparted life, and life everlasting or eternal. But *zōē* never denotes the life that Christ gave as a ransom for sinners. The word is found in many phrases, like "bread of life," "word of life," "tree of life," "book of life," "crown of life," "water of life," "spirit of life," "gift of . . . life."

2. That *psuchē* is used to denote natural life, life as it is lived from day to day, the whole being, and especially the mental and emotional life. It is invariably used to denote the life that Christ laid down as a ransom for sinners. It is found in many phrases like: "the

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young child's life," "take no thought for your life," "lose his own soul," "in exchange for his soul," "give his life a ransom for many," "is not the life more than meat?" "lay down my life for the sheep," "an anchor of the soul," "He laid down his life for us," "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," "vexed his righteous soul from day to day," "eight souls were saved," "Shepherd . . . of your souls," "every living soul died in the sea," "loved not their lives unto the death," "as thy soul prospereth."

Terms Variouslly Rendered

It is easy to see that the same word *psuchē* is variously rendered "life" and "soul," according as it fits our idiom better, but that in some places in which it is rendered "soul," it could as well be rendered "life," such as, "What shall a man give in exchange for his *life* [instead of *soul*]?" "Let every *life* [not soul] be subject unto the higher powers." "An anchor of the *life* [instead of *soul*]." "Shall save a *life* from death." "Eight *lives* were saved." "Saw under altar the *lives* of them."

The thing to be noted especially in this connection is that the Greek does not confuse the words "soul" and "spirit," as we do in English. The true word "spirit" (*pneuma*) is nowhere translated "soul" in the New Testament. It is often rendered Ghost or Holy Ghost, to use an Anglo-Saxon word instead of the Latin word "spirit," but nowhere "soul," and in only one instance "life," in which instance it could as well read, "had power to give *breath* unto the image of the beast," to make it alive and active, just as God breathed breath into Adam's nostrils and he became a living being. In fact, *pneuma* is rendered "wind" in John 3:8, first part, and "Spirit" in the last part. It is this ethereal thing *pneuma* that believers in immortality of the soul confuse with *psuchē*, the true word for soul, when they talk about immortal souls or the departed spirits of the dead, which in reality are nothing more than their departed breaths. The Bible tells us that God imparted breath to Adam to make him alive, and that when he or any other man died, his breath returned to God who gave it, without being anything essentially different from what it was when God imparted it to man.

To sum up, it may truthfully be said—

1. That "soul" is a proper word to use for the *natural* life—the whole being, or especially the mind and emotional part of natural man.
2. That it cannot be properly applied to the breath or spirit that departs at death.
3. That from the human standpoint "spirit" is a proper word to use for the natural breath (the Greek uses it for even the natural air), for

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the quality of man's mind and heart while he lives, and for the breath that departs at death and returns to God, who gave it.

4. That "spirit" cannot properly denote an entity that leaves the body at death, retaining its personality and continuing to live an endless life. The spirit of man is natural and mortal, as the spirit of God is divine and immortal, eternal.

5. That "life" is plainly used in two basic senses—the principle of life that gives and maintains being, and life as it is lived out in human existence. In the first instance, it may and should be called "life." In the second it may, in our idiom, be properly called either "life" (in the second sense) or "soul." The first belongs to God, and the second belongs, as a gift of God, to man. The first has no existence apart from God, and the second has no existence apart from man. There is therefore no such thing as soul distinct and apart from man, either before or after death.

What life is it, then, that sustains our physical being day by day? It is the imparted life, the *zōē*, breathed into our nostrils as in the case of the first man, to make and keep us alive.

How may we speak of what the *zōē* produces in our daily experience by stimulating us to act and think and feel? We may call it life in the sense of what experience produces, or we may call it by that wonderful word *psuchē*, by which we love and hate and believe and hope and aspire and achieve in our natural lives. In other words, it is the *soul* of living, which ceases to exist when our *zōē* that produces it is withdrawn, just as naturally and logically as heat stops when the gas that produces it is turned off.

What shall we say of the life that departs at death? It is nothing less and nothing more than the spirit, the *pneuma*, that, as the medium of life, is breathed into the body at birth and breathed out again at death. In fact, the Greek way of saying that Jesus gave up the life He had lived for us in the flesh, is "he breathed out," phrased in King James as "gave up the ghost." That is what every man does at death—merely breathes out again what was breathed into him at birth. There is absolutely no possibility here of conceiving that an "immortal soul" leaves the body at death, carrying with it a personality that goes right on thinking and feeling and never dying. The only thing that never dies is the life, the *zōē* of God, which He lends to us at birth and withdraws to Himself again at death. In other words, "the spirit shall return to God who gave it," and that is the end of life for us till God sees fit to breathe it in again, which He will do in the glorious resurrection morning for all those who are sleeping in Jesus.